

ARTICLES

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Transitive L-verbs (grade 2) and transitive H-verbs (grades 1, 4, 5, and 6) in Hausa verbal compounds*

Abstract

This paper examines Hausa verbal compounds in terms of the division of regular verbs (verbs in the “grade system”) into verbs which have a High or Low tone first syllable. The focus of the paper is the surprisingly small number of transitive L-verbs (verbs beginning with a Low tone – “grade 2”) and their limited use of compound markers which contrasts strongly with the frequency of transitive H-verbs (verbs beginning with a High tone) and their markers. I also describe several devices (e.g. grade-switching and covert subjects) which “allow” the formation of verbal compounds with transitive L-verbs.

Keywords: Hausa, verbal compounds, (modified) grade system

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1. Introduction

Hausa verbal compounds are many and varied. Their first member is generally a verb, although a few verbal compounds have either a person-aspect-complex or a /*ma-*/ prefix preceding the verb (see subsection 2.1). A wide variety of verbs are found in these compounds, both regular (those found in the “grade system” – see subsection 2.2) and irregular. In this paper I focus on the regular transitive verbs in compounds and describe a stark contrast between compounds which have a H[igh] or L[ow] tone first syllable (“H-verbs” versus “L-verbs”, defined in subsection 2.2.2). In a word, the number of transitive L-verbs found in Hausa verbal compounds is surprisingly small.

Before explaining this contrast I describe verbal compounds and the verbal “grade system”, as well as various modifications to that system, concluding with my own definition of regular H- and L-verbs.

2. Hausa verbal compounds and Parsons’s “grade system”

Here I describe verbal compounds in terms of the types of verb and marker found in these compounds (subsection 2.1). In subsection 2.2 I describe Parsons’s “grade system” (originally proposed in 1960) and the modifications which have been suggested since that date.

2.1. Hausa verbal compounds

Most Hausa verbal compounds have an imperative form (see 1a); a further form – the tone-lowered form – is only found in compounds (1b); in a number of compounds the finite form of the verb is found (1c):

(1a) The verb with an imperative form:

<i>rùfa-baaya</i> ¹	(cover back)	‘support’
<i>nèemi-naakà</i>	(look.for yours)	‘a name’
<i>sàkoo-tumaaki</i>	(loosen sheep)	‘simpleton’

¹ Hausa examples and words in the text are written in *italics*; when the vowel is long it is written double, when short it is written with a single vowel. High (H) tone vowels are unmarked, e.g. *-uwaa* is HH and the vowels are short-long; low (L) tone vowels are marked with a grave accent, e.g., *gyàaru* is LH and the vowels are long-short. The ‘trilled’ /r/ is marked *ř*, the ‘flapped’ /r/ is unmarked (*r*).

(1b) The verb with a tone-lowered form (not found in normal verbal morphology):

<i>dāfāa-dukà</i>	(cook all)	'jollof rice'
<i>kàarèe-dangi</i>	(finish family)	'type of arrow poison'
<i>bii-bango</i>	(follow wall)	'leakage along a wall'

(1c) The verb with the finite form:

<i>mootsà-jikii</i>	(move body)	'sport, physical exercise'
<i>tunà-haifūwaa</i>	(remember birth)	in: <i>ran</i> ~ 'birthday'
<i>kashè(e)-wāndoo</i>	(kill trousers)	'unemployment'

In many compounds with a noun direct object the final vowel of the direct object is shortened. In the examples below the nouns *baayaa* 'back', *dangii* 'family' and *bangoo* 'wall' have a short final vowel, marking the compound (along with the verb):

(1d) Final vowel shortening:

<i>rùfa-baaya</i>	(cover back)	'support'
<i>kàarèe-dangi</i>	(finish family)	'type of arrow poison'
<i>bii-bango</i>	(follow wall)	'leakage along wall'

Compounds with a noun direct object are the main focus of this paper; however, other syntax is found; in the examples below the first example has two transitive verbs but their direct object is assumed; the second has a pronoun direct object; the third has a pronoun indirect object and a noun direct object:

(1e) Varied syntax:

<i>dàki-bàri</i>	(beat stop)	'strong, reliable thing'
<i>maīmaītoo-nì</i>	(desire me)	'small plant used in love potions'
<i>ciree-mīn-Kayàa</i>	(pull.out for.me thorn)	'children's game'

There are compounds where a person-aspect-complex (expressing person, number and aspect) precedes the verb; in the example below the person-aspect pronoun is fourth person subjunctive (= 'one should'). In a few compounds a *ma-* prefix precedes the verb which is tone lowered and phonologically reduced (*ràs* ← *rasàa* 'lack'):

(1f) Person-aspect-complex or *ma-* prefix preceding the verb:

<i>à-kòori-buuzuu</i>	(4pl.SBJ chase-Tuareg)	'police-like house guard'
<i>maràs-hankàlii</i>	(ma:lack sense)	'senseless person'

The above examples exemplify the kinds of compound markers and syntax found in these compounds.

2.2. Parsons’s “grade system” and modifications

The term “grade system” was introduced by Parsons (1960, 1962, 1971-72). He proposes seven grades in which morphology (tone pattern and final vowel or consonant) and syntax operate in different forms of the verb (A-, B-, C- and D-form²).

TABLE 1. A résumé of disyllabic verb grades (Parsons 1960, 1962, 1971/72)

Form Grade	A-form ØDO	B-form PDO	C-form NDO	D-form IO
1	HL-àa	HL-àa	HL-à	HL-àa
2	LH-aa	LH-ee	LH-i	Gr1, 4, pds
3	LH-a	–	–	Gr1, 4, pds
4	HL-èe	HL-èe	HL-è(e)	HL-èe
5	HH-aĩ	HH-aĩ dà	HH-aĩ dà	HH-aĩ (dà)
6	HH-oo	HH-oo	HH-oo	HH-oo
7	LH-u	–	–	Gr1, 4, pds

The abbreviation ‘pds’ (Table 1, D-form/IO) means “pre-dative suffix” (see Newman 2000: 283-284). The pds is suffixed to a verb with a H tone first syllable (i.e. it is an H-verb) and ends with a consonant, *-m* or *-ř*. The pds is only used with verbs in grades 2, 3 and 7. These facts dovetail nicely with my description of L-verbs and indirect objects (subsection 2.2.2.1).

Grades 1, 4 and 6 have both transitive and intransitive verbs, verbs in grades 2 and 5 are only transitive, and in grades 3 and 7 only intransitive. Grades also have a semantic component: the basic form and semantics of a verb are found in grades 1, 2 or 3, while grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 change the semantics of the basic verb, adding an extra meaning³.

² The A-form refers either to a transitive verb where the direct object does not immediately follow the verb (ØDO) or to the sole form of an intransitive verb; the B-form is immediately followed by a pronoun direct object (PDO), and the C-form by a noun direct object (NDO); the D-form is associated with the indirect object which may be either a noun or a pronoun (PIO/NIO).

³ Grade 4 has a “totality” meaning, grade 5 is “causative”, grade 6 is “ventive”, and grade 7 “sustentative”.

Parsons defines all verbs whose basic form does not match those of the seven grades as “irregular”. Irregular verbs have a basic (non-grade) form but may also add/change meaning by taking the form of a grade, e.g. the irregular verb *faadī* ‘fall’ may take the grade 6 form *faadōo* ‘fall (down here)”; the irregular verb *sanii* ‘know’ may take the grade 5 form *sanaā* ‘inform (cause someone to know)’.

2.2.1. Modifications to the grade system

Over the years various modifications have been suggested (Lukas 1963, Pilszczikowa 1969, Furniss 1981, 1983). Significantly, Newman (1973) suggests both a radical modification to the grade system as well as a historical basis from which the system developed; he replaces Parsons’s idea of secondary grades with the idea that semantic “extensions” were available both to verbs in the grades and to irregular verbs⁴. Nevertheless, Parsons’s system has survived and has even been extended by the addition of grades 0 and grades 3a and 3b (Newman 2000 & Jaggat 2001) – verbs which Parsons defined as irregular.

2.2.2. Further modifications. McIntyre: regular H and L-verbs

McIntyre (2005/2008, 2006) retains Parsons’s definition of irregular verbs and suggests that the verbs in the grades be called “regular” verbs, a term not previously used. More radically, I suggest that there are two kinds of regular verb: those whose first syllable has a [H]igh tone (“H-verbs”) and those whose first syllable has a [L]ow tone (“L-verbs”). Thus grades 1, 4, 5 and 6 are H-verbs while grades 2, 3 and 7 are L-verbs. Tonal opposition is not the only difference between H- and L-verbs⁵; further contrasts are found in the form of the verb preceding an indirect object (2.2.2.1), in the morphology of the respective verbal nouns and in the related syntax (2.2.2.2).

2.2.2.1. Regular H and L-verbs: Indirect objects

When followed by an indirect object H-verbs (grades 1, 4, 5 and 6) have their own form – starting with a H tone – preceding the dative object; L-verbs (grades 2, 3 and 7) either “borrow” the form of an H-verb (Parsons’s “D-Form”) or use the pds (see subsection 2.2 above). The following examples contrast the forms of

⁴ Newman (1973) identifies extensions in verbs of grades 1 and 2 – alongside basic verbs; he identifies basic verbs in grade 4 – alongside extensions.

⁵ A radical interpretation of this difference holds that syntactic relations and the associated semantics are coded by this tonal difference, even if such tonal opposition is no longer productive. Various authors have made suggestions which seem to relate to semantic differences between H- and L-verbs: Gouffé (1988), Caron (1991), Abdoulaye (1992, 1996), De Campos (1998), Frajzyngier & Munkaila (2004), and McIntyre (2006).

the verb with a noun direct object (NDO) and a pronoun indirect object (PIO) using the H-verb *nuunà* 'show' and the L-verb *sàyi* 'buy':

(2a) NDO forms, H- and L-verbs:

<i>Sun nuunà tausàyii</i>	'They showed sympathy'
<i>Audù yaa sàyi littaaŋii</i>	'Audu bought a book'
<i>Sun gĩrbi daawàa</i>	'They reaped corn'

(2b) PIO forms, H- (and L-)verbs:

<i>Yaa nuunàa mini shii</i>	'He showed me it'
<i>Audù yaa sayàa mini littaaŋii</i>	'Audu bought me a book'
<i>Sun gĩrbam mini daawàa</i>	'They reaped corn for me'

In 2a we have the respective H- or L-verb form preceding a direct object: grade 1 *nuunà* and grade 2 *sàyi* and *gĩrbi*. In 2b both verbs – preceding the indirect object *mini* '(for) me' – have the HL form of an H-verb: *nuunàa*, *sayàa* and the pds *gĩrbam*.

2.2.2.2. Regular H- and L-verbs: Verbal nouns

A clear difference between H- and L-verbs is also found in the morphology and syntax of verbal nouns (used with the imperfective aspects and in other nominalised contexts).

The verbal noun (henceforth VN) of an H-verb has a /-`waa/ suffix (with a low tone preceding the *-waa*); thus, the VN of *kařàntaa* 'read' is *kařàntàawaa* 'reading', in which the falling tone *-tâa-* is caused by the low tone preceding *-waa*; H-verbs use this VN only when no object follows the verb; thus, in the first sentence in 3a the form of the verb (the VN following *yanàa*, the imperfective person-aspect-complex) contrasts with that of the finite verb in the second sentence following *yaa*, the perfective person-aspect-complex (henceforth PAC):

(3a) Verbal noun of H-verbs:

<i>Audù yanàa kařàntàawaa</i>	'Audu (he) is reading (something)'
<i>Audù yaa kařàntaa</i>	'Audu (he) reads (something)'

The nominalisation of the VP – with an H-verb – in the imperfective aspect also obtains when an object is present. Newman (2000: 288) names such a VP an "infinitive phrase" which he defines as a "non-finite phrase containing a finite verb stem". Thus, in 3b, the phrases *kařàntà littaaŋii* and *kařàntaa mini littaaŋii* are nominalised following the imperfective PAC *yanàa*. (The same phrases found in sentences following e.g. the perfective PAC *yaa* would not be nominalised):

(3b) Transitive H-verbs with direct (*littaafii*) and indirect (*mini*) object(s):

<i>Audù yanàa kařàntà littaafii</i>	'Audu is reading a book'
<i>Audù yanàa kařàntaa mini littaafii</i>	'Audu is reading me a book'

In contrast to H-verbs the VNs of transitive L-verbs (grade 2) do not take the /-`waa/ suffix⁶; their morphology is variable. Many such verbs have the same shape as the (finite) A-form, but many have a tone pattern and a final vowel which are not predictable. The VN – with or without a direct object – is always used with the imperfective and in other nominalised contexts; when no object follows the VN, it stands alone; when a direct object follows the VN a so-called linker (-*n/-ř* for masculine/feminine VNs) is suffixed to the VN. In 4a we have *yanàa* (imperfective PAC) preceding the VN *sàyee* with no direct object, and the VN with linker *-n* preceding the NDO:

(4a) Transitive L-verbs with and without an NDO:

<i>Audù yanàa sàyee</i>	'Audu is buying (something)'
<i>Audù yanàa sàyen littaafii</i>	'Audu is buying a book'

In 4b – with the indirect object *mini* – the transitive L-verb *sàyaa* (LH) “borrows” the H-verb form *sayàa* (HL). As an H-verb following an imperfective PAC this is an infinitive phrase:

(4b) Transitive L-verb with an indirect (*mini*) and a direct object (*littaafii*):

<i>Audù yanàa sayàa mini littaafii</i>	'Audu is buying me a book'
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Thus, the contrast between H- and L-verbs is found both in the morphology of their VNs and in the fact that infinitive phrases are only found with H-verbs (H-verb forms).

My definition of regular verbs as H- and L-verbs implicitly accepts Parsons's definition of irregular verbs. I refer to these verbs as “I-verbs”. Like H-verbs, I-verbs begin with a H tone but their morphosyntax (dative forms and verbal nouns) is

⁶ The *-waa* of the VNs of intransitive L-verbs in grade 7, e.g. *gyàaruwaa* (← *gyàaru* ‘be repaired’), are disputed. Newman (2000: 705) is of the opinion that such VNs include the /-`waa/ suffix, but that – unlike *kařàntàawaa* (see 3a above) – the L tone preceding /waa/ does not trigger a falling tone on the *-u-* because the latter is a short vowel. Gouffé (1982) argues that the final vowel is /aa/ as in grade 3 (e.g. VN *řitaa* ← *řita* ‘go out’) and that the /-*w-/* is epenthetic. McIntyre (forthcoming) suggests that, in gr7 VNs, the feminine suffix /-*uwaa/* replaces the final *-u* of the verb (*gyàaruwaa* ← **gyàar-* ← *gyàaru*) – analogous to the feminine suffix /aa/ found in the VNs of the other L-verbs (grades 2 and 3).

hybrid: many, like H-verbs, have their own dative forms with an initial high tone; others, like L-verbs, “borrow” the form of an H-verb. Similarly, like H-verbs, some I-verbs use the /-`waa/ suffix on the VN and can form an infinitive phrase, while others, like L-verbs, have their own VN form – including some which, like L-verbs, have a VN which has the same form as the A-form. However, these parallels are unsystematic, and do not allow a division of I-verbs into two (H- vs. L-) groups.

In a further change of perspective and terminology I use the term “frame” alongside Parsons’s “form”⁷. Frame is the verb (with its syntactically appropriate form) together with its object. When describing the frames, I separate the pronoun and noun indirect objects into D- and E-frames, respectively – in contrast to Parsons, who uses the term “D-form” to describe the verb preceding an indirect object, noun or pronoun. (This usage parallels Parsons’s separation of B- and C-forms used with pronoun and noun direct objects). I use the term “frame” in the description of verbal compounds below.

The following Table 2 summarises the morphosyntactic differences between H-, L-, and I-verbs: the initial tone, the use of the D-form, the use of the -`waa VN and infinitive (Inf.) phrase.

TABLE 2. The morphosyntax of H-, L-, and I-verbs

Verb type	Initial tone	Dform	-`waa VN	Inf. phrase
H-verbs	H	yes	yes	yes
L-verbs	L	“borrowed”	no	no
I-verbs	H	varied	varied	varied

2.3. The small number of transitive L-verbs in compounds

The scarcity of transitive L-verbs (grade 2) in compounds was first pointed out by McIntyre (1998). Newman (2000: 117) describes this detail very succinctly: “Grade 2 verbs are surprisingly, and inexplicably, rare [in verbal compounds]” (my emphasis). In McIntyre (2006) I offered a possible explanation for the “inexplicable” which has neither been disputed nor confirmed. This explanation is phrased in terms of my modified grade system (see subsection 2.2.2 above),

⁷ The term “form” is ambiguous at least pedagogically: to say that *kaamàa* is the A-form of the verb ‘to catch’ is correct, but the B- and D-forms have the same morphology. With “frame” there is no ambiguity because the object is part of the frame; thus, the A-frame has no object (*kaamàa* ‘catch (something)'), the B-frame has a PDO (*kaamàa shi* ‘catch it/him’) and the D-frame has an indirect object pronoun (*kaamàa masà* ‘catch (something) for him’); I introduce the E-frame when the indirect object is a noun (*kaamàa wà Audù* ‘catch (something) for Audù’).

i.e. a systematic difference between transitive H- and L-verbs in compounds. This difference in quantity is complemented by the fact that the compound markers “tone-lowering” and “final vowel shortening” are not found with L-verbs; nor are these verbs found in unmarked compounds.

In section 3 I describe the syntax of Hausa verbal compounds (3.1), and the ways in which verbal compounds are marked for compounding (3.2). In section 4 I describe verbal compounds with a transitive L-verb, detailing the features which make these compounds unusual: frequency, morphology, and syntax. In section 5 compounds which start with a person-aspect-complex or with the prefix /*ma-*/ are described. In section 6 I summarize what has been seen in the previous sections and offer a hypothesis concerning the low frequency of transitive L-verbs in compounds.

3. The syntax and morphology of H-verbs and L-verbs in verbal compounds

In McIntyre (2006) I described 700 verbal compounds which vary in terms of both their syntax and the form of the verb found in the compound. There are both transitive and intransitive verbs, but this paper focuses on the 535 compounds with a transitive verb⁸. Subsection 3.1 gives an overview of compounds with a transitive verb and object(s) and/or adjunct (henceforth V+X compounds), whereby the chief focus is on compounds with a noun direct object (NDO). In subsection 2.2 the morphology of the verb in the compound is described: the imperative form and tone lowering (the latter found only in compounds), and compounds with a finite verb; a further theme is “final vowel shortening” – of the NDO in V+NDO compounds⁹.

3.1. The syntax of V+X compounds

The syntax of V+X compounds is quite varied: they may have two to five members: verb(s) plus object(s) and/or adjunct. Hausa transitive verbs may appear in five frames: a) the “zero direct object” frame (V+∅DO) in which the DO does not immediately follow the verb (in normal syntax it may precede the verb – when e.g. in focus – or may simply be understood in the context); b) the pronoun or noun DO frames (V+PDO and V+NDO), in which the DO immediately follows

⁸ If PAC and *ma-* compounds (discussed in section 5) are included, there are 626 compounds with a transitive verb and 74 with an intransitive verb.

⁹ Final vowel shortening is also found in names, a context in which, perhaps, the short final vowel may be the Old Hausa final vowel (see e.g. Jaggard 2001: 37–39).

the verb; and c) the pronoun or noun indirect object frames (V+PIO and V+NIO)¹⁰.

Table 3 shows the distribution of syntactic frames among transitive H-, L-, and I- verbs and gives an idea of the relative paucity of the latter, especially in the V+NDO frame:

TABLE 3. Transitive H-, I- and L- (gr2) verbs in V+X compounds

Frames	H-verbs	L-verbs (gr2)	I-verbs	Totals
V+∅DO	24	36	20	80
V+PDO	15	3	22	40
V+NDO	239	19	101	359
V+PIO	3	–	40	43
V+NIO	6	–	7	13
Totals	287	58	190	535

V+NDO compounds are the largest group of compounds (359 from 535), with 239 H-verbs (141 grade 1, 30 grade 4, 62 grade 5 and 6 grade 6 verbs); there are 101 V+NDO compounds with an I-verb. There are only 19 V+NDO compounds with a transitive L-verb (grade 2); this paucity will be described in section 3. The fact that almost half of the V+∅DO compounds have a transitive L-verb is discussed in subsection 5.2.

3.2. Verbal morphology and “final vowel shortening” in V+NDO compounds

In this section the 359 compounds in the NDO frame are commented on; they have either an imperative form (IMP), a tone lowered form (TL) or a finite form (henceforth UM: “unmarked”). The IMP, TL and UM forms of the verb are described in subsections 3.2.1 – 3.2.3. In 3.2.4 I describe final vowel shortening.

TABLE 4. Verb markers in V+NDO compounds

Verb type	IMP	TL	UM	Total
H-verbs	123	72	44	239
L-verbs	19	-	-	19
I-verbs	7	94	-	101
Total	149	166	44	359

¹⁰ In these frames the PIO or NIO generally follows the finite verb immediately; however, in focus, etc. the IO is fronted leaving either the pre-noun IO marker *wà* or an IO pronoun to follow the verb.

As we see in the Table 4, only 19 transitive L-verbs are found in the V+NDO frame; in these 19 compounds the verb has the IMP form; transitive L-verbs in compounds (including V+ØDO and V+PDO frames) are not marked with TL or FVS, nor are they found in the UM compounds.

3.2.1. Imperative forms in V+NDO compounds

Table 5 lists the imperative forms (IMP) found in V+NDO compounds. H-verbs generally have their usual IMP forms: grades 1 and 4 have their LL form, with occasional LH forms – Jaggard (2001: 446) says the latter are “sporadically reported” in normal speech; grade 6 verbs have LH tones; grade 5 verbs are generally found with a phonologically reduced (monosyllabic) form and a H tone (see Jaggard 2001: 449-450)¹¹. The transitive L-verbs (grade 2) are found with the IMP form which has the same LH morphology as the finite form. Two examples of I-verbs with the IMP form are given: LH and H.

TABLE 5. IMP forms on verb of V+NDO compounds

H-verbs	V+NDO	Interlinear	Meaning
gr1 (LH)	<i>rùfa-baaya</i>	(cover back)	‘support’
gr1 (LL)	<i>kàamà-kâi</i>	(hold head)	‘an assistant’
gr4 (LH)	<i>bùude-littaafi</i>	(open book)	‘butterfly’
gr4 (LL)	<i>wàashè-gàri</i>	(clear town)	‘next day’ (adv.)
gr5 (H)	<i>kaa-dà-giivaa</i>	(fell elephant)	in: <i>karmaamii</i> ~
gr6 (LH)	<i>sàkoo-tumaaki</i>	(loosen sheep)	‘simpleton’
L-verb			
gr2 (LH)	<i>nèemi-naakà</i>	(look.for yours)	‘a name’
I-verbs			
(LH)	<i>bàri-shakkà</i>	(leave doubt)	‘beads worn just below the knee by loose women’
(H)	<i>shaa-kutuu</i> ¹²	(drink male.lizard)	‘fool’

The variations in the tone patterns of these IMP forms – whether of H-, L- or I-verbs – are not significant. However, the fact that the LH form of the grade 2 L-verb in *nèemi-naakà* could be either the IMP or the finite form requires a comment. If *nèemi* in the compound is a finite form, then we have an unmarked

¹¹ I have a single example of a disyllabic gr5 verb in a V+NDO compound: *àuràf-dà-kâi*; the verb has LL tones.

¹² The compound *shaa-kutuu* is also found lexicalised, appearing as a single word: *shaakutuu*.

compound. However, I assume that the form in the compound is IMP because transitive L-verbs are found in 36 compounds with a V+ØDO-frame as well as in 3 compounds with a V+PDO frame, all of which clearly have IMP forms¹³.

3.2.2. Tone lowered forms

The tone lowered form – with L(L) tone pattern and a long final vowel – marks many verbal (and, occasionally, noun) compounds; it is not found in the normal morphosyntax of Hausa verbs. The form is found in 166 of 359 compounds with a transitive verb and a NDO (32%); of these, 94 have an I-verb (most I-verbs in compounds have a TL form), 72 have an H-verb (see Table 4). It is not found as a marker of transitive L-verbs in compounds¹⁴. Table 6 gives examples of tone-lowered forms:

TABLE 6. TL forms in V+NDO compounds

H-verbs	V+NDO	Interlinear	Meaning
gr1	<i>dàfàa-dukà</i>	(cook all)	'jollof rice'
gr4	<i>kàarèe-dangi</i>	(finish family)	'type of arrow poison'
I-verbs	<i>bii-bango</i>	(follow wall)	'leakage along wall'
	<i>rigàa-kafi</i>	(precede stockade)	'prevention'

In normal syntax, the verbs in 6 (*dàfàa*, *kàarèe*, *bii* and *rigàa*) would have the following forms in the V+NDO frame: *dafà* (HL), *kaarèe* (HL), *bi* (H) and *rigaa* (HH).

3.2.3. Unmarked compounds (V+NDO)

Unmarked (UM) compounds are a relatively small group of compounds but seem to be in frequent use. Only H-verbs are found in these compounds; they

¹³ The finite transitive L-verb (grade 2) A-form ends in /-aa/, but the IMP form ends in either /-aa/ or /-i/. Of the 36 compounds with a V+ØDO frame and a transitive L verb, 33 end in -i, two in -aa; and one is a "pseudo-IMP" form (see note 14).

¹⁴ A further form – LL with final -à(a) – is found in compounds with both H-, L-, and I-verbs. I do not include this form in the above description as it is a purely surface form in which ØDO or NIO frames are phonologically and syntactically reduced. The form resembles a LL IMP and I call it the 'pseudo-imperative' form.

Here are three examples: the I-verb *barii* 'leave', the H-verb *kwàntaa* 'lie down' and the L-verb *daukàa* 'carry':

<i>bàrà-gurbì</i>	(leave.for/in nest)	1) 'eggs left unhatched or addled'
(← <i>bàf-wà-</i> or <i>bàri-à-gurbì</i>)		2) 'p. or th. left after others have gone'
<i>kwàntà-kùrii</i> (← <i>kwàntaa à-kùrii</i>)	(lie.down open.eyed)	'chaperone'
<i>dàukàa-wuyà</i> (← <i>dàuki-à- wuyà</i>)	(carry on neck)	'child carried on shoulders'

are simply infinitive phrases (see subsection 2.2.2.2) which have established themselves as compounds. 37 of these compounds have an NDO-frame; one has a PDO-frame. L-verbs cannot form infinitive phrases and are not found in UM compounds; theoretically, some I-verbs could form UM compounds but none are found¹⁵:

TABLE 7. Unmarked compounds

H-verbs	V+NDO	Interlinear	Meaning
gr1	<i>iyà-lauyàa</i>	(be.able lawyer)	in: <i>gàa</i> ~ 'there's a clever (wily) lawyer for you!'
	<i>mootsà-jikii</i>	(move body)	'sport, physical exercise'
	<i>tunà-haifûwaa</i>	(remember birth)	in: <i>ran</i> ~ 'birthday'
	<i>waasà kwakwalwaa</i>	(sharpen brain)	'riddle'
gr4	<i>kashè(è)-wàndoo</i>	(kill trousers)	'unemployment'
	V+PDO	Interlinear	Meaning
gr6	<i>mařmařtoo ni</i>	(desire me)	'small plant used in love potions'

3.2.4. Final vowel shortening

Final vowel shortening (FVS) as a marker of names and compounds was first identified by Gouffé (1965: 207). Ahmad (1994: 61-2) offered further insights into its use in verbal compounds. It is found in 2-member V+NDO compounds in which the final vowel of the NDO is shortened. The examples given in 1d (above) are repeated here (Table 8):

TABLE 8. Final vowel shortening of the NDO

H-verb (gr1)	<i>rùfa-baaya</i>	(cover back)	'support'
H-verb (gr4)	<i>kàarèe-dangi</i>	(finish family)	'type of arrow poison'
I-verb	<i>bii-bango</i>	(follow wall)	'leakage along wall'

As mentioned above (subsection 2.1) the final vowels of the nouns *baayaa* 'back', *dangii* 'family', and *bango* 'wall', are shortened in the compound. It should

¹⁵ In some cases, the IMP form of monosyllabic I-verbs has a H tone rather than the expected L tone, e.g. *ci-dà-mòotsin-wani* (lit.: eat with motion.of other) '1. epithet of cattle egret, 2. scrounger'. At first glance, such compounds could be classified as UM; however, Jaggar (1982) has shown that monoverbs often have IMP with a H tone.

be pointed out that, while FVS is widely used¹⁶, it is not used by all speakers in this context.

The compound markers TL and FVS are only found in compounds with H- and I-verbs; only H-verbs are found in UM compounds. L-verbs are not found with these markers.

4. Transitive L-verbs in verbal compounds

In this section compounds with a transitive L-verb (grade 2) are examined: V+NDO, V+PDO, and V+∅DO frames – with special mention of the lack of FVS on the NDO in V+NDO compounds. In subsection 4.2 a number of compounds are listed in which the verb is a transitive L-verb (with the appropriate semantics) but it takes the form of an H-verb (grade 1).

4.1. Compounds with transitive L-verbs in the NDO, PDO and ∅DO frames

In this section I describe the various frames found in compounds with a transitive L-verb: V+NDO, V+PDO, and V+∅DO (subsections 4.1.1 – 4.1.3, respectively); in 4.1.1 the focus is on the “non-appearance” of FVS (see 3.2.4) in the few examples (19) of V+NDO compounds that are found.

4.1.1. The “nonappearance” of FVS in V+NDO compounds with a transitive L-verb

Transitive L-verbs are “[...] the largest class of basic transitive verbs in the language” (Newman 2000: 642): the fact that only 19 compounds (5,3% of 359 V+NDO frames; see Table 8 above) are found with a transitive L-verb in an NDO frame is unexpected, to say the least. The further fact that FVS is not used in marking these compounds (see McIntyre 2006: 97f) adds to the need for an explanation. The 19 V+NDO compounds are listed here in five sub-groups (5a–e) which are organised according to the lexical and/or morphosyntactic reason for the “non-appearance” of FVS.

In the first group (5a) the NDOs cannot be shortened: *gùr^zau* ‘invulnerable man’ ends in a diphthong; the final vowel of *dukà* ‘all’ is lexically short; *Baidù*, is a name – and, like many names, has a short final vowel:

¹⁶ It is also used in a few Noun+Noun compounds, e.g. *jàn-bàaki* (red.of mouth) ‘lipstick’ where the noun *bàakii* shortens the final vowel.

(5a)

<i>dàagùri-gùrzau</i>	(gnaw.at invulnerable.man)	'charm for invulnerability'
<i>dâu-dukà</i>	(take all)	'fine person'
<i>hòori-Baidù</i>	(train <i>Baidu</i>)	'a large leather bag'

In 5b the NDO in most examples has a bound possessive pronoun *-nkà/-nki* ('yours' m./f.). In two compounds (*nèemi-naakà* and *sàaminaakà*) we find an independent possessive pronoun ('yours' m.). These pronouns end with a short final vowel and cannot undergo FVS:

(5b)

<i>dàuki-kwàrìnkà</i>	(take quiver.of.you)	'matrilocal marriage'
<i>dàuki-sàndankà</i>	(take stick.of.you)	'matrilocal marriage'
<i>dàuki-faifanki</i>	(take small.mat.of.you)	'food for casual guest'
<i>màari-bàakinkà</i>	(slap mouth.of.you)	'beans cooked alone'
<i>nèemi-naakà</i>	(look.for yours)	'name'
<i>sàaminaakà</i>	(get yours)	'town (S.E. of Kano)'
(<i>< sàami-naakà</i>)		
<i>zàabi-sônkà</i>	(choose wish.of.you)	'greetings on radio'

I shall comment on these possessives below (5.3).

The four compounds in 5c are the only compounds with an NDO and a transitive L-verb where FVS might apply; it does not:

5c.

<i>cìri-cookàlii</i>	(pull.out spoon)	'a dancing game'
<i>gwàagwiyi-gòorubàa</i>	(gnaw deleb-fruit)	'children's game'
<i>shàaki-bùkii</i>	(smell feast)	'p. habitually going to celebrations without invitation to cadge'
<i>zàabùri-kàryaa</i>	(cause.leap.forward bitch)	'type of sleeveless shirt'

None of the Hausa speakers I asked applied FVS in these four compounds¹⁷.

The following compound is similar to those in 5c; however, it seems to have been lexicalised and is found in the dictionaries as a single word; it does not shorten the final vowel:

¹⁷ Ahmad mentions *gwàagwiyi-gòorubàa* several times. He does not mark a short final vowel; nor does he remark on this exception to his rule (1994: 61-2).

(5d)

<i>d̥ibgibaṙàa</i>	(drive.away begging)	'1) showing concern at sth. which is not one's business
(< <i>d̥ibgi-baṙàa</i>)		2) talking at random'

Lexicalised compounds either lengthen a short final vowel or retain its original length. (The compound *sàaminaakà* in 5b is lexicalised, but retains the short final vowel of the independent possessive).

In the following group we have compounds with a transitive L-verb and either a complex NDO (first two examples) or the syntax V+NDO+V+NDO (last two examples):

(5e)

<i>sàari-màataṙ- rùmaanaa</i>	(chop wife.of gladioli)	'woman who lets herself be bullied'
<i>d̥auki-kanwaṙ-bàakii- bàa-awaakin-bàakii</i>	(take potash.of guests give.to goats.of guests)	'paying debt by borrowing from other person'
<i>fàd̥i-banzaa- fàd̥i-wòofii</i>	(say uselessness say emptiness)	'talking about any thing and everything'
<i>sàki-reeshèe- kàamà-ganye</i>	(release branch catch leaf)	'leaving the reliable for the unreliable'

FVS does not apply in complex compounds, neither in the above (L-verbs), nor in complex compounds with H- and I-verbs.

4.1.2. Transitive L-verbs in V+PDO compounds

Here (6), are the three examples of transitive L-verbs in a ØDO frame:

(6) (Transitive L-verb) V+PDO:

<i>d̥âu-ni</i>	(take me)	in: <i>taa yi musù ~</i> 'she issued their rations'
<i>sàu-ta-gà-waawaa</i>	(release her to fool)	'girl whose marriage comes to swift end'
<i>cùud̥ee-ni-in-cùud̥ee-kà</i>	(massage me 1s.SBJ massage you)	in: <i>zaman duuniyàa</i> <i>bikii nèe, ~</i> 'life is a celebration "you help me I help you"'

These three compounds are the only compounds with a transitive L-verb in a V+PDO frame. This contrasts with 15 compounds with transitive H-verbs

(11 gr1 verbs, 1 gr4 verb, 1 gr5 verb and 2 gr6 verbs) and 22 with an I-verb. Given the relatively small number of compounds in this frame (40, of which 3 – 7,5% – have an L-verb), the contrast is perhaps less significant than in the V+NDO compounds (4.1.1). On the other hand, given that the largest number of transitive verbs in the language are L-verbs, one might also have expected more in this frame.

4.1.3. Transitive L-verb in V+ØDO compounds

Here a few examples of transitive L-verbs in a ØDO frame:

(7) (Transitive L-verb) V+ØDO:

<i>dàki-bàri</i>	(beat stop)	'strong, reliable thing'
<i>dāuki-sàkaa</i>	(take put)	'type of quilted saddle-cover'
<i>shàaci-fàđi</i>	(comb say)	in: <i>yi</i> ~ 'invent stories'
<i>zàri-rùugaa</i>	(grab run)	'rugby'

The fact that 36 of 80 compounds (45%) in a ØDO frame have a transitive L-verb, while only 24 H and 20 I-verbs appear in this frame seems to weaken the claim that transitive L-verbs are unexpectedly scarce in compounds. I shall address this question in subsection 6.3.

4.2. Grade switching in compounds: Transitive L-verbs with a gr1 form

Here I present a further feature – grade switching¹⁸ – which affects the form of the transitive L-verb in V+NDO compounds. In the following 11 compounds the transitive L-verbs (their identity as transitive L-verbs (grade 2) is clear from their meaning) take the form of a grade 1 (H-) verb with the IMP form:

(8) Grade-switching: Transitive L-verbs with the form of a transitive H-verb:

<i>dàngwàrà-dàbe</i>	(hit floor)	'overgrown clitoris'
<i>fàskàrà-tòoyi</i>	(defy burning)	'a herb'
<i>gàagàrà-baami</i>	(defy foreigner)	'tongue twister'
<i>gàagàrà-bin</i>	(defy monkey)	'plaited leather dog collar'

¹⁸ Jagger (2001: 272f.) uses the term “grade-switching” to describe L-verbs using an H-verb form when preceding an indirect object (see section 2.2.2.2). The same term is used by Newman (2000: 708) to describe verbs in grades 1 and 4 H-verbs whose VNs have the shape of a gr2 VN L-verb. Although neither author uses my H- and L-verb terminology, both are describing how an L-verb “switches” to the form of an H-verb – as I do in the present section.

<i>gàagàrà-gàasa</i>	(defy competition)	'outstanding person'
<i>gàagàrà-kòoyo</i>	(defy learning)	'mysterious thing'
<i>gàagàrà-kwànta</i>	(defy untying)	'knotted hobbling rope'
<i>hàràrà-garkè</i>	(glare.at flock)	'an eye syndrome'
<i>Kàrbà-gàri</i>	(take town)	'conqueror of the town'
<i>màarà(a)-bàakinkà</i>	(slap mouth.of.2m)	'beans cooked alone'
<i>zàabùrà-dawaaki</i>	(make.leap.forward horses)	'epithet' ¹⁹

I suggest that the transitive L-verbs in these compounds have taken a grade 1 form because the latter are normal in compounds whereas the former are rare, at least in V+NDO compounds. Given the fact that the form is that of an H-verb, it is not surprising that FVS is found. In section 5 I describe compounds beginning with a person-aspect-pronoun (PAC) and with a *ma-* suffix, respectively.

5. PAC- and *ma*-compounds

In this section I describe two kinds of compounds, firstly, PAC-compounds – whose first member is a person-aspect-complex (5.1) and, secondly, compounds with a /*ma-*/ prefix – both singular and plural (5.2). The syntax of these compounds is similar to that of the V+X compounds but not quite as varied. Some features of these compounds seem to challenge the central thesis of this paper, namely the status of compounds with transitive L-verbs.

5.1. PAC+V+X compounds

Some 51 VCs with a transitive verb start with a PAC (Table 9):

TABLE 9. Distribution of transitive frames in PAC+V+X VCs

Frame	H-verbs			L-verbs	I-verbs	Total
	gr1	gr4	gr5	gr2		
V+NDO	–	–	–	7	20	27
V+PDO	1	–	1	1	1	4
V+∅DO	5	2	–	1	11	19
V+PIO	–	–	–	–	1	1
Total	6	2	1	9	33	51

¹⁹ The compound *zàabùrà-dawaaki* is an epithet used by professional beggars for any person named Amadu ([A959 ; B1119]). *Kàrbà-gàri* seems to refer to the son of *Bawo*, the ancient Hausa ancestor.

The distribution of frames and verb types in this table differs significantly from those seen in the previous sections: of the 27 NDO-frames, 7 have a transitive L-verb and 20 have an I-verb; there are no H-verbs. Here are the seven V+NDO compounds with a transitive L-verb:

(9) The seven PAC+V2+NDO compounds:

<i>à-kòori-buuzuu</i>	(4pl.SBJ chase-Tuareg)	'police-like house guard'
<i>à-kòori-kuuraa</i>	(4pl.SBJ chase-cart)	'delivery truck'
<i>à-wàawùri-kàryaa</i>	(4pl.SBJ grab bitch)	'type of sleeveless shirt'
<i>à-zàabùri-kàryaa</i>	(4pl.SBJ grab bitch)	'type of sleeveless shirt'
<i>à-zùngùri-duuniyàa</i>	(4pl.SBJ poke world)	'type of pointed boots'
<i>wàa-ya zàagi-bàaba</i>	(who 2mREL.CMP insult father)	'type of club'
<i>wàa-ya zàagi-dòogarii</i>	(who 2mREL.CMP insult king's guard)	'type of fabric'

As well as NDO-frames we find 4 PDO-frames, 19 ØDO-frames, a single PIO-frame (no NIO-frame). The fact that there are no H-verbs with an NDO-frame seems to contradict the central point of this paper. In subsection 6.3 I argue that this is not the case.

5.2. Singular and plural *ma*- compounds with a transitive verb

A further 40 compounds have a /*ma*-/ prefix and a transitive verb; there are both singular (5.2.1) and plural *ma*-compounds (5.2.2). (There is no direct correspondence between singular and plural *ma*-compounds, although in a few cases singular compounds have a plural *ma*- equivalent).

5.2.1. Singular *ma*- compounds with a transitive verb

There are 25 singular *ma*- compounds with a transitive, tone lowered, phonologically reduced verb following the prefix. Some 17 of these compounds have an I-verb, 16 of which have an NDO-frame; 1 has a PIO-frame. Eight have an H-verb and an NDO-frame; there are no transitive L-verbs (Table 10):

TABLE 10. Distribution of transitive frames in singular *ma*-V+X VCs

Frame	H-verbs			L-verbs	I-verbs	Total
	gr1	gr4	gr5	gr2		
V+NDO	3	1	4	–	16	24
V+PIO	–	–	–	–	1	1
Total	3	1	4	–	17	25

The fact that there are no transitive L-verbs may be accidental, but perhaps the tone-lowered, phonologically reduced verb plays a role: transitive L-verbs are not found with TL in V+X compounds (see subsection 3.2.2). The following examples are all NDO-frames: two H-verbs with phonologically reduced forms (*ras* ← gr1 *rasâa* 'lack'; *kas* ← gr4 *kashêe* 'kill'); and two monosyllabic I-verbs (*fi* 'exceed' and *soo* 'like'):

(10) *ma*-CVC/CVV compounds:

<i>marâs-hankâlii</i>	(<i>ma</i> :lack sense)	'senseless person'
<i>makâs-dubuu</i>	(<i>ma</i> :kill thousand)	'killer of thousands'
<i>mafii-kyâu</i>	(<i>ma</i> :exceed beauty)	'the most beautiful'
<i>masòo-fadâa</i>	(<i>ma</i> :like quarrel)	'quarrelsome person'

5.2.2. Plural *ma*- compounds with a transitive verb

There are 15 plural *ma*- compounds with a transitive verb; these compounds have a plural meaning. The syntax is limited to the NDO frame; we find 7 H-verbs (all grade 1), 5 L-verbs and 3 I-verbs.

TABLE 11. Distribution of transitive frames in plural *ma*-V+NDOs

Frame	H-verbs	L-verbs	I-verbs	Total
	gr1	gr2		
V+NDO	7	5	3	15
Total	7	5	3	15

The /*ma*-/ prefix is followed by a verb stem and a suffix /-*aa*/. Together these three components have the same morphology as a plural noun of agent (/ma-/, verb stem with L tone, and the plural suffix /-aa/). However, in the latter, while the verb stem and the verb's meaning are retained, the verb stem does not keep its verbal function; in contrast, the verb stem in the plural *ma*- compound retains its verbal function and may take a direct object, etc. In the examples below (11) we find the verb stems (with L tone) of two transitive H-verbs (*kèer-* ← *keerâa* 'smith', *shèek-* ← *sheekâa* 'winnow', both grade 1) and of two transitive L-verbs (*hàlâřt-* ← *hàlâřtàa* 'attend' and *hârb-* ← *hârbâa* 'hunt, shoot') as well as one I-verb (*sân-* ← *sanii* 'know'):

(11)

<i>makèeraa-farfaruu</i>	(<i>ma</i> :smith white[pl.])	'white-metal smiths'
<i>marshèekaa-ayaa</i>	(<i>ma</i> :winnow tigernut.grass)	in: <i>ganin</i> ~ 'looking at p. contemptuously'

<i>mahàlàftaa tàarôn</i>	(<i>ma</i> :attend meeting.DET)	'those attending the meeting'
<i>mahàrbaa-baunaa</i>	(<i>ma</i> :hunt bushcow)	'bushcow hunters'
<i>masànaa-taafiihii</i>	(<i>ma</i> :know history)	'historians'

The fact that there is no significant difference between the numbers of transitive H-, L-, and I-verbs (7, 5, and 3, respectively) again seems to put the argument of this paper in question. In fact, both PAC and plural *ma*- compounds seem to offer a different picture to the one seen in section 2 where we saw a very small number of V+NDO compounds with a transitive L-verb. In PAC and plural *ma*- compounds the number of transitive L-verbs is normal – indeed, in PAC+V+NDO compounds there are no H-verbs.

I shall discuss the significance of the distribution of these compounds in subsection 6.2.

In subsection 6.3 I outline a hypothesis which shows that the presence of transitive L-verbs in PAC and plural *ma*- compounds does not change the fact that transitive L-verbs have an anomalous status in verbal compounds.

6. The descriptions, the problems, and a hypothesis

The above description of Hausa verbal compounds indicates that transitive L-verbs are rare, at least in compounds with a V+NDO frame. This description – both the syntax of the compounds and their markers – is summarised in subsection 6.1 (where V+PDO frames are also mentioned). In 6.2 the apparent inconsistency of transitive L-verbs being well represented in compounds with a V+ØDO frame as well as in PAC- and plural *ma*-compounds is discussed. In 6.3 I offer a hypothesis which resolves these apparent inconsistencies.

6.1. The V+NDO (and PDO) compounds

In section 2 we saw that transitive L-verbs in compounds with an NDO are few. Table 12 summarises this information:

TABLE 12. Distribution of NDO-frames of H-, L-, and I-verbs in compounds

	L-verbs	H-verbs	I-verbs	Total
V+NDO	19	239	101	359
PAC+V+NDO	7	–	20	27
sg.- <i>ma</i>	–	8	16	24
pl.- <i>ma</i>	5	7	3	15
Total	31	254	140	425

The table shows the distribution of compounds with an NDO frame. In the simple V+NDO compounds we find 19 transitive L- as against 239 transitive H-verbs and 101 transitive I-verbs (5.3%). If the PAC and *ma*- compounds with an NDO are included, the figures are 31 transitive L-verbs as against 254 H-verbs and 140 I-verbs (subsection 3.1). It is clear that transitive L-verbs in compounds with an NDO are surprisingly few (7.3%)²⁰.

Furthermore, transitive L-verbs are only found with the imperative form in compounds; these verbs are not found with tone lowering or in unmarked compounds; nor are they found with final vowel shortening (see subsections 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4, respectively). Furthermore, a small group of these verbs “switch” grades (to grade 1 H-verb forms) in V+NDO compounds (see subsection 4.2).

Looking at the V+PDO compounds we find 3 with a transitive L-verb, 15 with an H-verb and 22 with an I-verb (see Table 3). Statistically, the three compounds with a transitive L-verb and a PDO frame may not be significant. On the other hand, given that transitive L-verbs (grade 2) have the largest number of transitive verbs in the language, one might justifiably expect more in this frame.

6.2. Compounds with a V+∅DO frame, and PAC- and plural *ma*-compounds

The numbers of compounds with a transitive L-verb in a V+∅DO frame as well as those in PAC- and plural *ma*- compounds seem to challenge the argument made in this paper. Some 36 of 80 compounds (45%) in a ∅DO frame have a transitive L-verb, while only 24 H and 20 I-verbs appear in this frame.

Similarly, the PAC- and plural *ma*- compounds show no imbalance in the distribution of H-, L-, and I-verbs. Indeed, in PAC+V+NDO compounds, not a single H-verb is found, while there are 7 with L-verbs (3.1); this seems to challenge the argument made in this paper²¹. As for the plural *ma*-V+NDO compounds (4.1.1), there are 5 plural *ma*-V+NDO compounds with a gr2 verb compared with 7 with H-verbs and 3 with I-verbs.

²⁰ If the 11 transitive L-verbs which “switch” to the grade 1 (H-verb) form were added to those in Table 12, we would have 42 such compounds (just under 10%). This addition is, however, ambiguous, for while these verbs are, semantically, transitive L-verbs, their morphology in the compound is that of an H-verb.

²¹ However, PAC-compounds with H-verbs are found in ∅DO- and PDO-frames (seven ∅DO-, two PDO-frames) and there are 13 intransitive frames with an H-verb.

The existence of these possibilities (V+ØDO frame, PAC- and plural *ma-* compounds) for transitive L-verbs in compounds seems to challenge the central argument of this paper. I address this inconsistency in subsection 6.3.

6.3. A hypothesis about subject and object; “covert subjects”

In McIntyre (2006) I developed a hypothesis to explain the facts described above. The hypothesis is based on Abdoulaye (1996: 5) where he suggests that “the overall function of gr[ade] 2 [i.e. transitive L-verbs] is to select a unique argument for the verb *beside the subject*” (my emphasis). In V+NDO compounds the “unique argument” is the NDO, but it is not “beside the subject” because, quite simply, there is no subject in a V+NDO compound. I suggest that the “missing” subject explains the paucity of such compounds.

This hypothesis also offers an explanation of the problem posed by the fact that 36 of 80 compounds (45%) in the ØDO frame have a transitive L-verb as against 24 H- and 20 I-verbs (30% and 25%, respectively) found in this frame. This statistic seems to contradict the central thesis of this paper, however, since V+ØDO compounds have neither a subject nor an object, “the overall function of [transitive L-verbs] to select a unique argument for the verb beside the subject” is unproblematic in this frame.

Again, if this hypothesis is correct, the fact that PAC+V+NDO compounds are found with transitive L-verbs is not surprising: the PAC is a subject, and the formation of compounds with a transitive L-verb is straightforward. I also suggest that there are other – covert – subjects: firstly, the agentive prefix /*ma-*/ in the plural *ma-* compounds²², and secondly, possessive pronouns in compounds with a transitive L-verb and an NDO.

The /*ma-*/ is a widely used prefix in the formation of agentives; agents are subjects and thus the /*ma-*/ can be seen as a “covert” subject. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the verbal complex of the plural *ma-* compounds have the same morphology as plural nouns of agent (see 5.2.2).

A further covert subject is found in compounds with a transitive L-verb in the NDO frame, namely, the possessive pronouns: *-nkà/-naakà* ‘yours’ m.sg.; *-nkì, naaki* ‘yours’ f.sg. These pronouns are found in 7 of the 19 V+NDO compounds

²² The small number of singular *ma-* compounds makes it difficult to assess whether the “non-appearance” of gr2 verbs in singular *ma-*V+NDO compounds (as against 3 with a gr1 verb, 1 with a gr4 verb, 4 with a gr5 verb, and 16 I-verbs) is significant.

with a transitive L-verb; they refer to the subject (normally expressed in the “missing” person-aspect complex (PAC); see examples 5b repeated here):

(5b)

<i>dāuki-kwàrìnkà</i>	(take quiver.of.you)	‘matrilocal marriage’
<i>dāuki-sàndankà</i>	(take stick.of.you)	‘matrilocal marriage’
<i>dāuki-faifankì</i>	(take small.mat.of.you)	‘food for casual guest’
<i>màari-bàakìnkà</i>	(slap mouth.of.you)	‘beans cooked alone’
<i>nèemi-naakà</i>	(look.for yours)	‘name’
<i>sàaminaakà</i>	(get yours)	‘town (S.E. of Kano)’
(< <i>sàami-naakà</i>)		
<i>zàabi-sônkà</i>	(choose wish.of.you)	‘greetings on radio’

7. Conclusion

In this paper I have described Hausa verbal compounds in terms of my modified grade system in which regular verbs are divided into H- and L-verbs (see 2.2.2.2). A particular focus was the regular verbs in V+NDO compounds, showing that transitive L-verbs are not usually found in such compounds. We saw that compounds with these verbs are not only restricted in number, but also in the kinds of verb form/marker found in the compound, a restriction which is underlined by the fact that in a few compounds, transitive L-verbs use the form of an H-verb (grade-switching; see subsection 4.2). A hypothesis was offered which suggests an explanation for apparent inconsistencies, i.e. where the number of compounds with transitive L-verbs compares easily with those of H- and I-verbs: in the ØDO frame, with a PAC or with a /*ma-*/ prefix. I proposed the idea of “covert subjects”, the /*ma-*/ prefix, and the possessive pronoun in a number of compounds with a transitive L-verb and an NDO frame.

The wider question is whether the differences between H- and L-verbs – which seem so clear in verbal compounds – are found in the Hausa verbal system as a whole. This picture should be completed with a closer look at I-verbs and at intransitive verbs.

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