

All the branches of Afroasiatic have living languages in which syllable quantity is phonologically salient and all such Afroasiatic languages, as far as I know, have quantitative systems of poetic metrics. Yet in the relatively large and growing literature on generative metrics, there is essentially no work on quantitative metrics of living languages. This paper will be a step in the direction of bringing living systems of quantitative metrics into the search for Universal Metrics (UM). I begin by critiquing the way generative metrics has dealt with Classical Arabic quantitative metrics. All the generative metrics literature has attempted to formalize the system of al-Xalil rather than applying principles of generative metrics to Arabic poetry itself. My critique will look at the work of Hausa poets, who have imitated the work of the Arab poets themselves, generally without explicit knowledge of the Xalilian system. I will then turn to the metrics of folk verse/song in Ngizim, which is about as far removed from Hausa composed poetry as one can get, both thematically and in terms of sources of influence, and show how exactly the same principles of organization can account for the regularities in both traditions. These principles, in turn, are part of UM that govern the forms of metrical verse in traditions other than those with quantitative metrics.