Marcello Lamberti

Map of Somali Dialects in the Somali Democratic Republic

With Supplement:

Speech Variation in Somalia with 6 maps and foreword by Andrzej Zaborski

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FOREWORD

The appearance of this publication is an important historical event. For the first time we have a clear picture of dialect differentiation and dialect spread of the Somali language within the present borders of Somaliland based on extensive and well-organised fieldwork. Never before has anybody collected and analyzed so much material. This is actually one of the first detailed dialect maps presenting also the most important isoglosses of a major African language in general. Dr. Lambertini owes quite a lot to the leading center of African studies of the University of Cologne but he also continues the well-established tradition of Italian research of the Somali language and culture which has culminated so far with Enrico Cervi and Mario Martino Moreno’s important contributions. He has done very important work which cost much effort and necessitated various sophisticated skills with a high degree of scientific impartiality. It is my deep conviction that this will remain a standard reference work not only because it records the situation A.D. 1981 but also because it presents valuable results of a highly technical analysis of newly collected data. The importance of this work not only for scholars but also for the Somalis in general can hardly be underestimated as it provides a basic source for the history of the Somali language and culture as well as guidelines for the further successful continuation of the language and culture policy of the Somali Democratic Republic. The next step would be a compilation of an even more detailed dialect atlas, or a detailed comparative dialect dictionary not to mention about monograph descriptions of various dialects and sub-dialects. This further step has also been initiated by Dr. Lambertini and we may hope that his Ph.D. thesis Die Somali-Dialekte: eine vergleichende Untersuchung (Somali dialects: a Comparative Study) as well as his descriptions of several Somali dialects will follow soon. A new period in Somali language studies is beginning.

Andrzej Zaborski
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ABBREVIATIONS

Ab. Af-Abgaal
Aj. Af-Ajuraan
Ash. Asxraaf
Ben. Benadir
Bi. Af-Baimal
cf. refer to
Dab. Af-Dabarre
e.g. for example
etc. et cetera
f. feminine
Ga. Af-Gaajicaal
Gr. Af-Garre
i.e. id est
Intr. intransitive

VERBS

V. Af-xamari
The material on which I base my observations in this pamphlet was collected during six months of field work in the second half of 1981 in the Somali Democratic Republic. At that time I had the chance to travel around the country and to work on the spot with numerous informants. A list with the precise indication of the dialectal varieties studied and the names of the many Somalis who acted as my informants can be found in my dissertation (Lamberti 1983:22-33). In that occasion I did not limit myself to collecting material only on the Somali language, but I collected also some material on the languages of the few minorities I found on my way. More than 64 tapes (for a total recording time of nearly 100 hours) were registered. The interviews with the informants were carried out with the aid of a questionnaire already drawn up in Europe, which was designed to grant the comparability of the collected material. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, i.e. a lexical and a morphological/syntactical one. The lexical part of the questionnaire was a list of ca. 800 words (mostly belonging to the basic vocabulary, but also culture terms were included). The morphological/syntactical part consisted of a corpus of more than 500 sentences from which the morphology and the syntax of the informant's idiom could be inferred. With the aid of the bulk of the material collected on numerous research sites, where I personally ascertained the existing linguistic situation, I was able to draw up with Mrs. Butt: the dialect map of the Somali Democratic Republic enclosed here, although I have only now found the time to devote myself to its publication.

Finally I would like to express my best thanks to the Graduiertenförderung of the University of Cologne which financed my field work in Somalia, to the Somali authorities (including the Somali National University of Mogadishu, the Ministry of Culture, the Somali Studies International Association and the local authorities of the single towns and villages, where I was) for the support they gave me during my stay in their country.
to all my Somali informants for their patience, to Prof. Bernd Heine, she encouraged me in my Somali studies and suggested to me to publish this work, to Mrs. Carla Het (cartographer at the Institut für Afrikaniistik of the University of Cologne) for her tremendous support without which this pamphlet could never have come about and to Prof. Andrzej Zaborski for having written the foreword of this work and for his advice.

1. Somali and the linguistic minorities

In contrast to most African countries the Somali Democratic Republic presents a considerable linguistic homogeneity. There are few linguistic minorities and they are limited to small territories, while the Somali language is the unchallenged medium all over the country. These minorities are usually so integrated in the Somali society that their members, as a rule regard themselves as Somali in spite of their own mother tongue. Their youth and grown-up men can usually speak fluent Somali, which is something like a second mother tongue for their children. Only the old people of these groups and the women still have some difficulties in speaking and understanding Somali, the former because of missing of school education and the latter because their social contacts are restricted to their respective clans. The only minorities, which until now were ascertained within the Somali Democratic Republic, are those speaking

1. OroNo,
2. Swahili,
3. Mushungulu and
4. Af-Roon.

2. Classification of the Somali dialects

Apart from the few minorities mentioned above, the mother tongue of all the rest of the citizens of the Somali Democratic Republic is the Somali language. But Somali is not a homogeneous idiom and consists of several dialects. Altogether we can subdivide all the Somali dialects spoken in the Somali Democratic Republic into five or six dialectal groups (according to whether a separate group is set up for Af-Jiidda or not). These are:

1. the Northern Somali dialects (Nom.), which supply the official language of the Somali Democratic Republic;
2. the Rennaadir dialects (Rem.), which are spoken along the coast of Southern Somalia;
The dialectal groups in detail

(3) the Ashraf dialects (Ash), which are spoken only in Nogali-Sha’s Shangani quarter and in the district of Norta.
(4) the May dialects, which are the usual medium of the former Upper Juba, of Lower Shabelle and partially of Lower Juba.
(5) the Digo dialects, which are scattered here and there all over the Nany-speaking territory. In spite of many common features these dialects are quite heterogeneous. The Digo dialectal group consists of Af-Tunni, Af-Darare, Af-Carre and perhaps Af-Ullidu, which however could be also classified as the sixth dialectal group of Somali.

3. The dialectal groups in detail

3.1. The Northern Somali dialects

The Northern Somali dialects are spoken all over Northern Somalia bordered by the region of Madag (including also Western Somalia), along the Ethiopian border in the regions of Bakool and Gede, and in the Lower Juba region. Being spoken by more than 60% of the whole Somali population, the NSom. dialects supply the official language of the Somali Democratic Republic. The most famous and important poets of Somalia recited and composed their poetical works in NSom., so for instance Sayid Maamid Gabdulle Xasan, Monte Xaii Ismaacill Galal and so on.

Some of the most striking peculiarities of NSom. are:

(1) the presence of pharyngeal phonemes (*a and *u);
(2) *q and *h are two different phonemes, cf. qa (slaughter!) vs. *ka (alcoholic drink);
(3) the absence of nasals like *m and *n;
(4) the progressive endings -gadaa/-gaada may not be contracted (for instance to -gaa or -gaaj);
(5) monosyllabic masculines form their plural by means of partial reduplication, cf. maas (masu) - pl. mas-as;

(6) there is no singular suffix. *-lee/-te is a demonstrative;
(7) there is an article *-ku/-tu for the subject case, cf. ilin a baklan-ku inaanka (he will come here);
(8) the subject pronoun of the 3.m.sg. is *-uu, cf. uu wuxuu yimid (he came);
(9) the object pronoun of the 2.pl. is *m, cf. wana 2.pl. arkay (I saw you);
(10) for the pronoun of the 1.pl. there is an opposition inclusive/exclusive, cf. annaga (I, but not you) vs. inanga (we and you);
(11) the infinitives of the 2. and 3. conjugation end in -n, cf. qabn (to break, tr.), qarbn (to understand);
(12) there is a subject marker -i or -ii, cf. maaq-lay tiiyik (a woman came);
(13) the negation of the jussive is -yuu, cf. yuu (aa) tepin (he shall not go);
(14) if the subject is focused, the verb is to be conjugated according to the restrictive paradigm, cf. adig-ii yimid (you came), but not adig-aa yimid.

Some more isoglosses characterizing the NSom. dialects are reported by Lambert (1983:65-74).

The NSom. dialects of the Somali Democratic Republic can be subdivided into three subgroups, namely:

(1) Northern Somali in its proper sense spoken in the regions Nogality Galbed, Togdheer, Saamak and Western Nogali. The dialects belonging to this group are called Af-Galise, Af-GondaARIOES, Af-Isaaq and partially Af-Warsangeli and Af-Delobaanaa;

(2) the Porrood group spoken in the regions Bari, Nogali, Madag, in Western Somalia (Somaliyya Galbeam) and along the Ethiopian border in the regions Galkadhab, Bakool and Gede. This is the Somali dialectal group, which presents the greatest number of speakers. The dialects of this group are the North-Eastern dialects (including Af-Warsangeli and Af-Delobaanaa),
The Benadir dialects

Af-Goijaal, Af-Jeleguwa, Af-Wardeer and Af-Marre-
haan;

(3) the Lower-Juba group spoken by the part of the Northern
Somali population, which have immigrated into the Lower Juba
region in the last 100-150 years. As this territory was a Be-
nadir-speaking area before the arrival of the immigrants from
the north, the NSom. of Lower Juba presents many peculiarities
typical for the Benadir dialects and could be considered a Be-
nadirized NSom.

This subdivision of the NSom. dialects is supported by a
complex of isoglosses, which because of lack of space cannot
be discussed here (for a synchronic comparison of the NSom.
dialects with the treatment of their internal differences, I
refer here to Lamberti (1983:489-711). Thus I will mention now
only one peculiarity for every subgroup:

(3) the NSom. in its proper sense is characterized among other
things by the realization of the phoneme /a/ as [A] also in
intervocalic position vs. the rest of NSom. [i] or [i], cf.
NSom. in its proper sense waa[n] yid (waa yid) (he said) vs.
the rest of NSom. waa[i] or waa[a-x] respectively;

(2) the Darood group is characterized by the realization of
the phoneme /j/ as /g/ vs.
Darood: /goy/ (remain!), waa/xaa caaba (it broke) vs.
the rest of NSom. /goy/ and waa/xaa jahaay respectively;

(3) the NSom. of Lower Juba is characterized by

a) the ending of the 1.sg. of the negative present /-i/

the rest of NSom. /-a/, cf.
Lower Juba maan-ki (I do not bring it) vs.
the rest of NSom. maan-ko;

b) the fact that the restrictive paradigm can be replaced by
the subjunctive, cf.
Lower Juba maan-ko (I bring it) vs.
the rest of NSom. maan-ko.

5.2. The Benadir dialects

The Benadir dialects (Ben.) are quite heterogeneous and
even within one and the same dialect there are several concurrent
forms, cf.

Xa. waa niraad / waa niraad
waa niraad / waa niraad
we say

Even for the application of grammatical rules there is a greater
freedom than in NSom.; so for instance if the subject is focused,
only the verbal form of the restrictive paradigm can be used in
NSom., while several possibilities exist in the Ben. dialects.

NSom. adig-aan dir-a (you send it),
but not *adig-aan dir-o or *adig-aan dir-ta
or other verbal forms

Aj. adig-aan dir-o or adig-aan dir-ta
adig-aan dir-a or adig-aan dir-o
(you send it).
The first form (of the four) is the usual one in Aj., but the
other ones too are also possible.

The Ben. group consists of five dialects, which are spoken
in the central part of the Somali Democratic Republic and along
the coast in the north and in the south of Mogadishu. I subdi-
vide the Ben. dialects in Northern and Southern Benadir (the
subdivision is only a geographical one). The Northern Ben. dia-
lects are:

(1) Af-Abgaal (Ab.) spoken in the southern part of Mudug and in
the regions Galgadan and Middle Shabelle up to Mogadishu;

(2) Af-Ajurbaan (Aj.) spoken in the region of Hiran and nowadays
also as a result of immigration into the districts of Shimbiris
(only in the south-western part), Saaxiim and Bu'aisha, which
has taken place in this century;

(3) Af-Gaaljaal (Ga.) spoken in the districts of Nuswe Berde,
Jalalaq, Jowhar and partially in those of Yarke Xoyin and Af-
goye. Moreover in consequence of immigration, which took place
during the last sixty years, some Ga.-speakers can be found also
in the districts of Saaxiim and Bu'aisha.
The Southern Ben. dialects are:

(4) Al-Xamari (Xa.) spoken only in the oldest part of the town of Mogadishu, i.e. Xamar-Weyne and

(5) Al-Rimale (Bi.) spoken in the districts of Afgooye (up to the town of Mogadishu), Merka and Jambone.

Ab. is the Ben. dialect presenting the greatest number of speakers and holds an intermediate position between Nsom. and the rest of Ben. Bi. consists of two similar dialects (i.e. Bi. of Lower Shabelle and Bi. of Lower Juba). Aj. bordering in the north on Nsom. and in the east on May has been influenced by both, nevertheless it has preserved its Ben. character. Some of the most striking peculiarities of the Ben. type are:

(1) q and k are two free variants of the same phoneme;

(2) the endings of the present tense are contracted in the sg. to -aa (vs. Nsom. -yaay) and -ee (vs. Nsom. -yaayaa), cf.

\[ \text{Xa. waa keen-aa} \quad \text{(I am bringing it),} \]
\[ \text{waa keen-ee} \quad \text{(you are bringing it) vs.} \]
\[ \text{Nsom. waa(yaay)-yaay and waa(yaayaa) keen-yaayaa respectively;} \]

(3) the plural morphemes are according to the respective dialects -gax (Xa. and Bi. of Lower Juba), -naddig/gax (Xa. and Bi. of Lower Shabelle) and -go (Bi. of Lower Shabelle);

(4) the subject pronoun of the 3.s.m. is -saan (vs. Nsom. -saay), cf.

\[ \text{Xa. biyaah-ya} \quad \text{(he drank the water);} \]

(5) the object pronoun of the 2.pl. is -li, cf.

\[ \text{Xa. waa ni arkey (I saw you);} \]

(6) the progressive form of the causative and reflexive conjugation contain s, cf.

\[ \text{Bi. waa jaabhaa (I am breaking it),} \]
\[ \text{waa imaaheh (you are coming) vs.} \]
\[ \text{Nsom. waa(n) jaahayya and waa(n) imaaheh respectively;} \]

(7) the ending of the 3.pl. of the jussive is -aan(o), cf.

\[ \text{Aj. ha siiy-aamo (they shall give it) vs.} \]
\[ \text{Nsom. ha siiy-eem;} \]

(8) the infinitive forms of the causative and reflexive conjugation do not end in -aa as in Nsom., cf.

\[ \text{Bi. jebi (to break, tr.) vs. Nsom. jebin,} \]
\[ \text{imaan (to come) vs. imaam;} \]

(9) the ending of the 1.sg. of the negative present is -i, cf.

\[ \text{Xa. na keen-i (I do not bring it);} \]

(10) the verb uwaad- (be able) is still conjugated by means of prefixes, cf.

\[ \text{Xa. uwaad-kaas (you are able),} \]
\[ \text{uwaad-dhaawaas (he is able),} \]

In Nsom. on the contrary this verb is conjugated only by means of suffixes, cf.

\[ \text{Xa. waad-dhaaw-yaay (you are able),} \]
\[ \text{waad-dhaaw-yaaw-yaay (he is able),} \]

(11) if the subject is focused, the subjective can be used, cf.

\[ \text{Aj. addi-yaas dir-to (you send it);} \]

Moreover the Ben. dialects share with Nsom. many isoglosses in opposition to the other Somali dialects and at the same time they share many isoglosses with the rest of Southern Somali in opposition to the Nsom. As the Ben. dialects are quite close to Nsom., many Somali scholars regard these two dialectal groups as a greater unity, that they call Maxaad-Dirr (Mat.) and that they set against all other Somali dialects.

In order to characterize each Ben. dialect I will report here only one or two isoglosses, but actually it is the structure of the respective dialect as a whole that differentiates it from the other ones. Some peculiarities of Ab. are:

a) the subject pronoun of the 3.s.m. is -oow (Northern Ab.), -saay (Southern Ab.), cf.

\[ \text{Ab. waad uyooy-sig (he is a tall man);} \]

b) the verbal ending of the 3.s.m. does not correspond to that of the 1.sg. as it does in the rest of Mat., but it is marked by a verbal pronoun -ya, cf.

\[ \text{Ab. was raab-yaye (he wants it),} \]
\[ \text{waad raab-yaye (he wanted it) vs.} \]
The Benadir dialects

the rest of Mt. was/wa ra-b-ax and was/wa ra-b-dey respectively.

Some peculiarities of Aj. are:

a) if the absolute personal pronouns are focused, they can be used without an article, cf.

Aj. a-ti ra-faag (you are good) beside
a-ti a-faag (like in the rest of Mt.).

b) the possessive of the 3sg. contain a dental

Aj. mis-aad-an'y (your table), vs.
the rest of Mt. mis-aad-a.

A peculiarity of Ga. is the use of nominal focus particles like yaa and baa (beside -aa), while the rest of Ben. has only -aa at its disposal, cf.

Ga. yaa aah (he is a tall man).

The Southern Benadir is characterized

a) by the plural morphemes -yaa and -ooy-y/ooy-hug, cf.

Xa./Bi. waan-yaa (noses) vs.
Nanm. san-an/san-an and Northern Ben. san-an/san-an/o;
Xa. naa-ooy-hug (women) vs. Nanm/Northern Ben. naa-o;

b) by the contracted imperative endings -yaa (vs. -yaa hayaa), yaa
(= -yaa hayaa), and so on, cf.

Xa./Bi. waan-3-aan (I am going to bring it);

Xa. by the possessive of the 1pl. -ooy-y/ooy-hug (vs. the rest of Ben. -ooy-y/ooy-hug); cf.

Bi. min-3-aan (our house),

Bi. (of Lower Shabelle) min-3-aan (our house).

Xa. differs from the other Ben. dialects in fact, that
the possessives usually appear without any article, cf.

Xa. min-aan haay (her house) vs.

Bi. min-aan-a/min-aan-a (her house).

The preterit endings of Bi. are -y/-tj/-xi and so on
(vs. the rest of Mt. -y/-tey/-ney or -y/-tey/-ney), cf.

Bi. waswa dii (he beat me) vs.
the rest of Ben. waswa dii.

3.5. The Ashraaf dialects

The Ashraaf dialects (Ash.) are spoken only along the coast
of Southern Somalia, their speakers are light-skinned Somalis of
Arabian appearance, who claim to be the offspring of the pro-
phet Mohamed. This is the dialectal group that presents the
least number of speakers, nevertheless the Ashraaf dialects
are among the most conservative and thus interesting Somali
dialects. They consist of only two subgroups, i.e.

1) the Ashraaf of Mogadisho, Af-Shingaan (Shi.), spoken in that
courtship, the capital called Shangaani and

2) the Ashraaf of Lower Shabelle spoken in the district of
Hebus, in the town itself and in some villages near it.

The peculiarities of these dialects are numerous, but only
a few of them will be reported here:

(1) s-tu + Ash. It vs. Mt. x-d, cf.

Shi. maskaa (the brain) + maskax -ta vs. Mt. maskada;

(2) s-tu + Ash. It vs. Mt. sh, cf.

Shi. waalaitey (my sister) + waala + tey vs.
Mt. walasha;

(3) t-y + Ash. 3, cf. Ne. gai (he entered) + gai - y-

(4) d+y + Ash. e, cf. Ne. us imar (he came) + imad - y-

(5) the phonetic sequence *uaw has not become y-

(6) all the nouns ending in a vowel are feminine, cf.

Shi. di-wa (the bull) vs. Mt. dhi-ja;

(7) plurals are formed with the suffix -aay, cf.

Shi. naa-gaay (women);

(8) all plurals are feminine, cf.

Shi. naa-gaay (the women) vs. Mt. naa-ga;

(9) the personal pronouns are:

Shi. 1sg. at (1) vs. Mt. ani-ja,
Some peculiarities of the Ash. of Lower Shabelle are:

a) progressive forms are formed by means of the infix -de- (+-a,) to see, cf.

    Mto. ag ker-ede-de (I am bringing it);

b) the verb to be has only one form for all persons in the past tense, cf.

    Mto. ag aha (I was), at aha (you were),
    among aha (we were) and so on vs.
    Shi. ag aha (I was), at aha (you were) and
    among aha (we were) respectively;

c) the vowel of the definite article is -o (vs. Shi. -a), cf.

    Mto. niq-ke (the man) vs. Shi. niq-ka,
    naak-te (the woman) vs. naak-ta,

d) the vowel of the demonstrative suffix for the deixis of proximity is -o (vs. Shi. -e), cf.

    Mto. naakta-kooy (this woman) vs. Shi. naakta-kooy.

3.4. The May dialects

The May dialects are spoken nowadays in the regions of Baboul, Geedu, Basy, Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle and to a small extent in Lower Juba (mainly in the district of Jassim). But not the whole population living in this territory has May as its mother tongue; in fact within the same area the Dighi and also some Mat. dialects are spoken (for instance Aj. and Ga. in the districts of Sakau and Bu’alse). Even in the districts of Dhinsoor, Qurycooley and Jilib, which along with Buurhakaba are the centers of the Dighi dialects, do the May-speakers fail to constitute 40% of the local population.

As the May dialects form a linguistic continuum, their subdivision in groups is difficult and to a certain extent arbitrary, especially because the borders among the dialectal varieties present merging features. Although May presents slight differences everywhere, on the whole it is homogeneous. Some of the most striking peculiarities of the May dialects are:

1) there is a vowel phoneme *o (vs. Mat. and Ash. have no o);
The Digil dialects

(2) There are no pharyngeals at all (vs. Mat. and Ash. have at least a devoted pharyngeal fricative x);

(3) 1 + s > Min 11, cf.
May weeli (you did it) + weeli + -ti;

(4) b + s > Min 11, cf.
May batti (you went) + batti + -ti vs.
Ash. basti and Mat. was(i) bas(i)key (you came out);

(5) b + n > Min 11, cf.
May basi (we went) + basi + -ni vs.
Ash. basi and Mat. was(i) baxyikey (we came out);

(6) All plural are masculine;

(7) The plural of the possessive and demonstrative pronouns are formed prefixing the demonstrative baam(i) to the respective adjectives, cf.
May baam-aas (those there), baam(i) keey (nine, pl.);

(8) The ending of the 2.sg. and 1.pl. of the present are -aasa and -aana respectively, cf.
May faad-aasa (you want), faa-an-aas (we want);

(9) The ending of the 2.sg. of the imperative of the reflexive conjugation is -ay, cf.
May safroy (sleep!);

(10) In the heraldic constructions the verb takes prolonged forms, which are typical for these dialects, i.e., -ee/-as (in the present) and -ey/-aas (in the past), cf.
May faaad-an-ee bess (we want some money).

I refrain here from a subclassification because of the above-mentioned reasons. As among the Somali dialects that do not belong to Mat., the May dialects present by far the greatest number of speakers, they could be said to symbolize in Somalia the opposite pole to Mat.

5.5. The Digil dialects

This is the most heterogeneous dialectal group of the Somali Democratic Republic and it is indeed questionable, whether the Digil dialects form a single group, or whether each single Digil dialect constitutes its separate group. This does not apply so much to Tu. and Nuh., but it does to Gr., and especially so to Ji. My Digil dialects I refer here to the following Somali dialects:

(1) Af. Tuul (Tu.) spoken in the districts of Heliisaro, Barawe and Jilib. The speakers of this dialect are nomads and herdsmen, who do not keep camels, but cattle, sheep and goats. Tu. is the Digil dialect which was influenced in the strongest way by Nuh;

(2) Af. Darar (Dh.) spoken mainly in the districts of Heliisaro, Qoysaxi and Helle, and as a result of immigration, which took place during the last decades, in the whole Middle Juba especially along the river. Dh. consists of two subgroups which are:
   a) Dh. in its proper sense, which is spoken by the Darar themselves and
   b) Af. Orco (Gr.); the Orco dialects traditionally entertain a very close and friendly relationship with the Darar and both clans claim to be brothers.

The Gr. of the district of Heliisaro has in the meantime been influenced by Nuh. quite strongly, while the Orco, who migrated to Heliisaro and Jilib, have preserved their linguistic identity better. Dh. is a fairly homogeneous dialect, but the May influence has also had a strong effect on it;

(3) Af. Garra (Gr.) spoken in the districts of Baydbaha, Heliisaro, Asidabakas and Orco. This is one of the most heterogeneous dialects of Somalia; in fact, some Gr. dialects (those of Bahidabakas and Orco) have, for instance preserved the conjugation with prefixes to date, while others (those of Baydbaha) have already given it up. Also the typical Digil plural morpheme -x is used more often in some Gr. dialects (especially in those around Baydbaha) by the common Southern Somali morpheme -yaal. Although the Nuur Amal are no Garra at all, their idiom belongs to this dialectal group. Also the Boni language of Kenya (described by Adde 1982) is very closely related to Gr.; indeed one could say that Gr. is the Boni of Somali, if you want, Boni is the Gr. of Kenya.
(4) Af-Jiddo (Ji.) spoken in the districts of Qoryooley, Balisoor, Jilib and Ranaakaba. It can be split into several dialectal varieties and has an exceptional position within the Digii group; especially on the lexical level, Ji. differs from all other Somali dialects. Therefore the status of Ji. as a Somali dialect has been called into question by some scholars like Hiber (1982) and Hantú (1981). On the other hand one may not forget the very numerous isoglosses which relate Ji. to Tu. and May and especially to Dab. and Gr. From a grammatical point of view Ji. is structured like these dialects. The Jiddo of the district of Ranaakaba seem to have given up their dialect in favor of the local May.

The most striking peculiarities, which justify referring to Tu., Dab., Gr. and Ji. as a single dialectal group (the digii group) are:

(1) 1 + t = Digii sh vs. May ll, cf.
Tu. walaamka (unrelated) + walaal + -tutta,
but in Ji. 1 + t = t (like in Ash.);

(2) plural nouns are formed by means of the suffixes -aa and mainly
-iss (in Ji. -issa), cf.
Tu./Gr. minaata (house), Dab. min-ss, Ji. min-ssa;

(3) the suffixation of the article is expressed by the lengthening of the post-final vowel (presenting similarities to May), cf.
Tu./Dab. laga (the leg), Dab. laga, Ji. aada (the eye) + addaa (the eyes), but also
May laga (the leg) + laga (the leg);

(4) the possessive of the 2.pl. is -jeg, cf.
Tu./Dab. walaal-keeg (your brother);
Ji. -jig (your mother), vs. May -jig, cf.
May waadig (your mother);

(5) the interrogative adjective which is expressed by the suffix -oo, cf.
Tu./Dab. nim-koo (which house), Gr. nim-oo vs. May and the rest of Somali -oo, -a, maashoo and so on, cf.

May miy-uu-oo (which house);

(6) the negative preterit is formed with the ending -oo (like in May), cf.
Tu./Dab. ma kooy-oo (I did not come);

(7) the infinitive form corresponds to the verbal stem (vs. May, where the infinitive is formed with the suffix -oo), cf.
Gr. keep (to bring), Tu./Dab. sheeg vs.
May sheen-oo;

(8) the verbal noun is formed with the suffix -saa (vs. May, where the suffix is -aa), cf.
Ji. sam-saa (the fact of wanting);
Tu./Gr. fed-saa (the fact of wanting) vs.
May fed-aa (the same);

(9) the future and present tenses are expressed by the insertion of the imperative prefix oo, cf.
Tu./Dab. sa sheenaa (I bring it, I will bring it),
Gr. oosa (vo ooa) keena (the same).
The prefix oo can be found only in the Digii dialects of Tu.,
Dab. and Gr., but not in any other Somali dialect;

(10) there are prolonged verbal forms in the case of application of the heraldic construction (like in May).

On the other hand the isoglosses separating these four dialects from each other are also numerous. Some of the most noteworthy features which distinguish them from each other are the following, whereby Ji. seems to be the most isolated dialect within the group:

in Tu.
(1) n + t = Tu. tt, cf.
Tu. dheeta (you said) + dhehe- + ts;
(2) h + n = Tu. nh, cf.
Tu. banna (we went) + bah- + na;
(3) the object pronoun of the 2.pl. is jikii, cf.
Tu. san jikii garoonaa (we know you);
The Digii dialects

(4) the plural of the possessive and demonstrative pronouns is formed by means of the prefix mu-, cf.
   Dhab. biin; hogo; hogo; (mine, pl.).

(5) the progressive endings are -aayi (1.sg./3.sg./aaj), -aayi (2.sg./3.sg./aaj) and so on, cf.
   Dhab. shee-agaay (I am/say/saying),
   shee-agaay (you are/were saying),

(6) the endings of the preterit are: -ii (1.sg./aaj) = (2.sg./3.sg./aaj)/
   -ii (1.pl.), -ii (2.pl.) and so on, cf.
   Dhab. sheee-ii (I said), sheee-da (you/she said), etc.,

(7) the auxiliary of the habitual past tense is dit-, cf.
   Dhab. aad shee-ditta (you used to bring it).

(8) the future tense can be expressed only by means of the imperfective preverb sa, cf.
    Dhab. sa shee-ma (I will bring it).

(9) the dative/benefactive preverb is i, cf.
    Dhab. i shee-ma (tell him).

(10) in the heraldic constructions the verbal form takes the suffix
    -ee as prolongation, cf.
    Dhab. All ma sa fed-ee beesa (All will look for some money).

In Dhab.

(1) waat = Dhab. baat, cf.
(2) the suffixation of the article to masculine ending in a vowel
    consists in the lengthening of the word-final vowel itself, cf.
    Dhab. harta (man) = hartaas (the man, the husband);
(3) the object pronoun of the 2.pl. is siin, cf.
    Dhab. all siin kasse (All knows you).
(4) the plural of the possessive and demonstrative pronouns is formed by means of the prefix ma- before the respective adjectives, cf.
    Dhab. hali-kasee (yours, pl.).
(5) the progressive forms are expressed by means of the prephrasic construction verbal noun in -aay plus auxiliaries (to keep), cf.

In Gr.

(1) haat = Gr. hat, cf.
(2) maat = Gr. maat, cf.
(3) the phonemes a, o, and i of the other Somali dialects correspond in
    Gr. to t, k and sh respectively (Gr./Somali denoting laws), cf.
    Somali dita-(to refuse) = Gr. tjaat-
    gal- (to enter) = kaa-
    jiiib (knew) = shiiib
(4) the gender consonant for masculines is realized as / after a consonant, cf.
    Gr. laamu-(a man) = laag-k-oo;
(5) the object pronoun of the 2.pl. is siin, cf.
    Gr. All awa karada (All knows you).
(6) the possessive suffix of the 2.sg. is -aaj, cf.
    Gr. miq-ah (your house);
(7) the plural of the possessive and demonstrative pronouns is formed by means of the prefix muw-, cf.
    Gr. muw-ah (yours, pl.).
(8) in the present the ending of the 3.pl. is -iq, cf.
    Gr. was keen-ig (they bring it/they will bring it);
The Digiti dialects

(9) the progressive forms are expressed by the verbal noun in -asti and the auxiliary heey- (to keep), cf.
   Gr. wa keen-asti-heey (I am bringing it);

(10) the auxiliary of the habitual past tense is shere, cf.
   Gr. wo keesh-teen (you used to bring it);

(11) the ending of the 2-pl. of the imperative in the reflexive conjugation is -astsha, cf.
   Gr. kar-astsha (know);

(12) there is an optional verbal focus particle, i.e. wa/wo;

(13) no prolated verbal forms are used in the heraldic constructions.

In Ji.

(1) I... = Ji. 11, cf.
   Ji. issa daitey (She here) = dait- + ey;

(2) the vowel of the suffix for reflexive verbs -aun- is syncopated in certain circumstances, cf.
   Ji. ana daitey (I was born) = aul-ad-ay;

(3) plurals are formed by means of the suffix -un, cf.
   Ji. min-dun (houses);

(4) the suffixation of the articles consists in the lengthening of the word-final vowel (also in singular), cf.
   Ji. wesen (crocodile) = wesan (the crocodile);

(5) the object pronoun of the 2-pl. is esem- (in the district of Hurri-mo), esem- (in the district of Jilli) and esem- in the district of Qurayyey, cf.
   Ji. Ali esem hammi (Ali knows you);

(6) the plural of the possessive and demonstrative pronouns is formed by means of the prefix baar-, cf.
   Ji. baar-abaake (those ones);

(7) the interrogative adjective which is expressed by the pronoun baamu/toom (pl. baarane), cf.
   Ji. baamu toom (which house), maamu toom (which woman);

(8) for the expressions of the past there are periphrastic constructions with the auxiliaries -oak/-oot- (to come), -aan- (to bring) and w- (to be), cf.
   Ji. sam-ook (I wanted), wim-ayo (I had gone);

(9) the forms of the 2-pl. of the present tense is -ta, cf.
   Ji. gow-ta (you have), aamnet-ta (you eat);

(10) progressive forms are expressed by means of the verbal noun in -asti and the auxiliary heey- (to keep), cf.
   Ji. ana aam-aa-aa-aa-sha (I am eating).

In some Ji. dialects (namely those in the district of Qurayyey) this periphrastic construction can be contracted to the verbal stem having the ending -astsha (1.sg./3.m.sg./-aashta (2.sg./3.f.sg./-aashta (1.pl.) etc., cf.
   Ji. aam-astsha (I am eating);

(11) the future and the habitual present are formed by means of the endings -en (1.sg./3.m.sg./-eemta (2.sg./3.f.sg./-eemta (2.pl.) and -eemta (3.pl.), cf.
   Ji. aam-en (they are eating; they will eat);

(12) the habitual past tense is formed by means of the endings -alay (1.sg./3.m.sg./-alay (2.sg./3.f.sg./-alay (2.pl.) = asat (3.pl.), cf.
   Ji. aam-alay (I used to eat it);

(13) the endings of the 3. person of the jussive are -is (3.m.sg./-its (3.f.sg./-ais (3.pl.) or -my (3.m.sg./-my (3.f.sg./-my (3.pl.), cf.
   Ji. forsh-is (he shall cook), forsh-ay (they shall cook);

(14) the endings of the imperative are -a (2.sg.) and -en (2.pl.), cf.
   Ji. sam-a (eat) = pl. aam-en;

(15) the negative prefix appears with the endings -ab (1.sg./3.m.sg./-tab (2.sg./3.f.sg./-mab (1.pl.)/tab (2.pl.)/ -tab (3.pl.), cf.
   Ji. nan-tab (you did not want it);

(16) the negative present appears with the endings -(e)mism (1.sg./3.m.sg./-(e)mism (2.sg./3.f.sg./-(e)mism (1.pl.)/(e)mism (2.pl.)/(e)mism (3.pl.), cf.
   Ji. aam-emim (I do not eat it);

(17) the dative/benefactive preverb is is, cf.
   Ji. y-is shu (go to him/her);
4. The linguistic minorities

4.1. The Oromo minorities

These ethnic groups live scattered in the whole region of Gede on the frontier with Ethiopia. The language of the Oromo minorities of Somalia is evidently quite heterogeneous. The relevant material, which I collected in the region of Gede, indeed contains many dialectal differences, although from a linguistic point of view it is doubtless Oromo. In Somalia these different Oromo dialects are called Af-Sirri, Af-Qorto, Af-Beera, Af-Garre, and so on. All of them are influenced to a certain extent by the Somali language, especially in the lexicon. Apart from in Gede Oromo minorities can be found in the region of Lower Juba and especially in the district of Badhade, Afmad and Kismayo.

4.2. The Swahili minorities

In Somalia there are only two Swahili minorities and both speak Northern Swahili dialects. The Swahili community of Lower Shabelle speaks a northern dialect called Af-shirka; those people live in the town of Barawe and are known as good artisans manufacturing shoes, bags and other leather goods. The second Swahili community lives in the district of Kismayo, the town itself and in the neighboring coast. Its dialect is called Af-Majum. By the Somali and Majum by the Swahili themselves. The Majum earn their living by fishing and are considered good and courageous sea people. They settled in the district of Kismayo before the big immigration from Northern Somalia took place, nevertheless they are probably not the original inhabitants of the Lower Juba region, because their extension is limited to the coast and, according to the Somali tradition, they came there some centuries ago from Zanzibar.

4.3. The Mushungulu minority

The Mushungulu live in the Lower Juba district of Janaame along the banks of the river Juba. The village Hormanjidad has to be considered the center of the Mushungulu minority. According to the Somali tradition these people immigrated during the last centuries from Tantana to Somalia. As the Mushungulu do not mingle with the rest of the Somali population and in their private life they isolate themselves from them, it is not seldom that their women do not learn Somali at all. On the other hand, their men, who, because of professional reasons have a greater chance of coming into contact with Somali, learn relatively quickly the local May dialect. The Mushungulu also differ from the rest of Somali by their habits, for instance, they eat fish from the river and cultivate the land. The language spoken by the Mushungulu is an Eastern-Bantu language, which according to W.I.G. Möllg corresponds to the language of the Shambas people of Tantana, although nowadays, presents some lexical loans from Somali and some regular sound correspondences in comparison with the language of the Shambas. Apart from this Af-Mushungulu disposes of a nominal class system and its structure is very similar to that of Swahili.

4.4. The Roon minority

The community speaking Af-Roon is not as a rule to be found in towns or villages, but they are scattered in the bush and live in settlements of two or three houses with their closest relatives. Although these people are only to be found in the district of Jilib in the Middle Juba region, there are some clues that lead us to assume that they perhaps inhabited a greater area between the two rivers in the past. Formerly roon was the name that people gave to those families, which lived by hunting and leather manufacturing in Somalia. Nowadays the word roon is used for designating people working as shoemakers.
All these people (hunters, leather manufacturers and sheenakers) belonged in the past to the lowest social classes of the Somali society. But by Boon minority it is not certain trade group to which is referred to, but to a clan of hunters and gatherers, who do not seem to have anything to do with the Boni (or Aweer) people living in Kenya and speaking a Somali dialect very similar to Af-Garre.

In the last decades the Boon underwent a very strong somalizing process, which has caused them to give up their mother tongue and to adopt the local May dialect of Jilib as medium. Only now people older than sixty years still have Af-Boon as mother tongue, but they use it only with fellow tribesmen of the same age. The medium used with and by younger Boon generations is, as I have already said, the May dialect of the district of Jilib; so that one has to assume that within one decade Af-Boon will die out. A reliable classification of this idiom is unfortunately not possible at the present time, because my material on it is too poor. Although Af-Boon differs in many respects from the other Somali dialects, I think that it is a Cushitic language (and perhaps an Eastern-Cushitic one). My supposition is based on the following pronominal forms:

Af-Boon

ami (I, personal pronoun of the 1.sg.);
ati (you, personal pronoun of the 2.sg.);
badia (he, personal pronoun of the 3.sg.), cf. Somali hebel (someone) < *hebels;
ukka (that, demonstrative), cf. Jilo akka (this), Dab. askay (that);
unna/-lina (this, demonstrative), cf. Somali -ka-n (this) vs. -kaa-n (that);
-na⁸ (definite article), cf. the nasal ending of some Oromo words like missaan (water, the water).

Also the existence in Af-Boon of two nominal classes characterized by the opposition k/-a vs. a present in the postponed demonstratives or possessives can be interpreted as a Cushitic characteristic, cf.

Af-Boon

akk vs. aata (that mentioned above) with common pl. aasa;
kaaka vs. takaata (yours, possessive pronoun of the 2.sg.);
nama (definite article), cf. Somali mid (one, definite pronoun) < *maa.

The lexical correspondences that Af-Boon shares with Somali, could obviously be recent borrowings (from the latter); the most striking thing however is the fact that the Boon forms often agree with the Old Somali ones, which we have to reconstruct from the comparison of the Somali dialects according to the historical-comparative method; they seem to have preserved the final vowel we have to reconstruct for Old Somali, cf.

Af-Boon | Old Somali | Modern Somali
---|---|---
afi (mouth) | *af/-a/-i | af
illa (eye) | *illa | il
luko (leg) | *luko | leg
hididi (vein) | *zizi | zidd
dhiliga (blood) | *dliga/dliga | dliga/dhiga
sugga (waist) | *siga | seg
runa (good) | *runa | run (truth)
manta (he vomited) | *matak/-matak- | mata- (to vomit).

The arguments inducing us to reconstruct the Old Somali forms as we have done above are explained by Lamberti (1983:191-171).

Sometimes the Boon lexems have no correspondence at all in Somali, but in other languages, cf.
NOTES

The document is difficult to read due to its orientation. It appears to discuss linguistic or cultural topics, possibly related to secret languages. The text is not fully legible, but it includes terms and phrases that might be related to language studies or cultural studies. There are also some handwritten notes, which are not clear enough to transcribe accurately.
Notes

10. Contraction from ouna/insa like Somali -ka/-ta < *akkas/attaa (demonstratives).
11. Perhaps from *ka + ku + akka and *ta + ku + tata respectively. That (of) you that one (of) you that one
12. According with the reconstruction of Old Somali, one has to suppose that the ending *-a alternated with *-a (cf. Lamberti 1983:231-233).
13. Cf. also Bene kikaka (basket).
15. The morphological data I have about Af-loco are too poor to estimate its relationship with Somali, but, I have the impression, that there are considerable differences between the two idioms.

Appendix

The classification of Ehret and Nuux Calli

At the 2nd International Congress of Somali Studies in Hamburg (August 1985), John Saeed read a paper prepared by Christopher Ehret and Maxamed Nuux Calli, who unfortunately could not attend the Conference. The paper ("Somali Classification") contained a classification of the Somali dialects basically differing from that I have proposed here, thus I will now express my opinion on it. The classification that Ehret and Nuux Calli propose is the following:

SOOMALI (1)
A. Bayso-Jinjddu
   1. Bayso
   2. Jinjddu
B. *Somali II
   1. Rendille
   2. *Somali III
      a. Garre-Awerr
         i. Garre
         ii. Awerr dialects
      b. Jada (incomplete)
         i. Tanim
         ii. Mandheere
      c. *Somali IV
         i. May
         (dialects: Looj, Qoninsoor, Badaaf, Bay, Badhaba, Hyle, etc.)
   ii. Baraasad-Northern
      a. Baraasame
      b. Banaasad
         (1) Xamar
         (2) Southern Banaasad (Janaame, Merka)
(A) Nomenclature of the Somali dialects

The first general observation is that this is more of a puzzle than a scientific classification. The authors in fact do not regard one of the most important problems of the Somali dialectology, that is, they replace the usual designations of the dialects by names of towns, although referring to Somalia, it is senseless to speak about the "dialect" of a certain town, because in every town and village of this country several dialects are spoken so that the label Baardheere or Baraawe does not say anything about the dialect meant and for the hearer/reader it constitutes more of a puzzle (as I shall show below) than a useful piece of information, especially if the speakers of the dialect in question are nomads, who move from place to place according to the season. Thus whoever wants to specify a Somali dialect, for avoiding misunderstanding he has to mention its usual designation (even if this corresponds to the name of a clan) and the place, where it is spoken, so for instance: Dab. of Dhiinsoor, Dab. of Jilib, Jl. of Jilib etc. But to say "the dialect of Jilib" does not mean anything, because it is too ambiguous, as in Jilib several different dialects are spoken. Nevertheless I shall try below to solve the puzzle the authors presented us, to interpret their classification and to comment on it, although unfortunately Ebre and Nuux Cali did not substantiate all their suppositions in the hand-out mentioned above.

(B) The Relationship between JI. and Bayso

The second point is that according to Ebre's and Nuux Cali's classification one would have to suppose that JI. is closer to Bayso than to the other Somali dialects, which of course is not the case, by a simple synchronic comparison of the grammatical structure of Bayso, JI. and the other Somali dialects, it is plain that JI. is much closer to Somali than to Bayso and even Bayso itself is not closer to JI. than to the other Somali dialects, at least not closer than to Mayo and to the rest of Dipil. For instance the JI. syntax is nearly the same as that of Somali, cf.

in Bayso: adjectives, demonstratives and relative clauses precede their governing noun and postpositions are used;

vs.

JI. and Somali, where adjectives, demonstratives and relative clauses have to follow their governing noun and instead of postpositions' preverbs are used.

The situation is similar in morphology: The plural formation of nouns in Bayso perhaps reminds one of some Somali dialects, but not of JI. The Bayso singulative suffix -ka can be found all over Southern Somalia in form of -koo/-to or -koo/-too or -koo/-too, but not in JI., whereas the singulative suffix is -n. JI. has no subject case marker in contrast to Bayso (-e) and Nso. (-/-a). The dative/benefactive case is marked in Bayso by the suffix -un. Also Ash., May and Dab. have a dative/benefactive preverb to, but JI. marks this case by the preverb is (like the Oromo postposition -vi). The demonstratives of Bayso are more similar to those of Dab. than to those of JI., cf.

Bayso Dab. JI.

m. hikki/hikka hikkey akka this
f. hitti/hitta hittey etta
n. aaksi akkey ekaka
f. aatti attey ettaa that

It is true that the verbal morphology of Bayso is very complex as is that of JI., but the two idoms use different auxiliaries, so that their similarity is rather a typological one. One could argue that if JI. nowadays is much more similar to
the other Somali dialects than to Bayso, it could depend on an approaching process (between Ji. and Somali) caused by the geographical situation of the two idioms and occurring recently, for instance, a substantial borrowing from Somali. This too is not true, in fact Ji. Shares with Somali, Rendille and Merti (in opposition to Bayso) the oldest sound laws, which brought about the formation of the Sam type within the Omo-Tana group like the older spirantization law (*kʰh*) and the older palatalization laws, cf.

after *e, *a and *o > *k > *h in the whole Sam and Ji.,

c.f.

*K*aha > NSom. raa (frog);
*jy-ag-kay > NSom. waa yahay (he is);
*d'ego-kaa > Mrr. dheqaha (the ears);
*walkalalo > Ji. walkala (the frog);
*joko > Ji. joh (leg);
*jyak *ay (jy-ag-kay) > Ji. ehey (copula, he is).

But in Bayso there are no clues at all for such development, cf.

Bayso

huuna ka ambalsee (the power of the wind), but not
*huuna ha ambalsee;
*raa ka konunoo (the way of the nose, viz. nostril), but not
*raa ha konunoo;
*haagee ko omette (where have you come from?), but not
*haagee ho onette.(All these examples are taken from Hayward 1979:107-108).

Note also: the Bayso postposition *ko (from) corresponds to the Ji. preverb ha (cf. Somali ka).

Before *i and *e, *k, *g and *kʰ > sh, j and j/j respectively in Somali and Ji., but not in Bayso, cf.

*Ken* > Bayso ken (five) vs. Somali and Ji. shan;
*Kinbir > Bayso kinbir (bird) vs. Somali kinbir and Ji. shibbir;
Baardeere? The Oromo dialect should not be referred to, because it does not belong to the Sam group. Af-Degodiya is clearly a Mat dialect and should be put into the group that Ehret and Nux Cali call Banaadis-Northern. If the authors mean by Baardeere the May dialect of this town, why do they not put it together with the other May dialects? The puzzle seems insoluble. Perhaps Baardeere refers to an other Somali dialect spoken by nomads, who were just in Hardheere, when Ehret interviewed them, but who do not always reside there. Let us suppose, Baardeere is a dialect which is very close to Tu, as the authors say, the closest dialect to Tu are the May on one side and the Dab. dialects on the other. As I visited Hardheere in order to study the dialects of the region, I did not find that Dab. is spoken there, but Dabarre are nomadic herdsmen and they move with their livestock according to the seasons. The territory which they move in is beside Western Baay, that of Middle Juba (along the river). Thus maybe when I was in Hardheere the Dabarre had already moved away, so that I was not able to ascertain that in the dry season Dab. is also spoken there. During Ehret's visit to Hardheere, he could have found Dabarre people there, studied their dialect and called it Baardeere. At any rate it is arbitrary to set only Tu. and Dab. (or Tu. and May) in one group, one has to set up either a separate group for every Digi dialect (so that for all Digi dialects four different groups would be set up) or a common group consisting at least of Tu., Dab. and Gr./Bos., May with its numerous varieties forms at all events a separate group. Ehret and Nux Cali on the contrary put it under c. Soomaali IV; according to which May is closer to the Mat. dialects than to the Digi ones. This is as wrong as the statement that Jii. is closer to Baysoo than to the other Somali dialects. In fact, May shares unequivocally many more isoglosses with Bajii than with the Mat. dialects.

(D) Ehret and Nux Cali's classification of the Mat. dialects

Regarding the Mat. dialects (called by Ehret and Nux Cali Banaadis-Northern), it is not clear which dialect is referred to by Barawe (another puzzle), because in Barawe no Mat. dialect is spoken at all. The dialects spoken in Barawe are:

(1) a Northern Shihili dialect called Af-chimwiini (spoken only in the town itself);
(2) the Tu. of the district of Barawe and
(3) the local May.

If Ehret and Nux Cali mean the Tu. dialect by Barawe, then it would be better placed under *Soomaali III; if they mean the May dialect of Barawe, then they ought to put it under the other May dialects and finally Af-chimwiini may not be taken into consideration, because it is no Somali dialect at all. Until one knows what the authors mean by barawe, the classification of this dialect cannot be verified. An easier puzzle is presented by the term Jowhar; the main dialect of Jowhar is Gw., which is clearly a Banaadis dialect, but also Ah. (which is like a bridge between Ben. and Nsom.) seems to be spoken there. Some problems are still caused by the terms Cadale and Boulouberti. In Cadale two dialects are spoken, i.e. Ab. and a Nsom. coinè (consisting mainly of the North-Eastern dialects). By Boulouberti Aj, should be referred to, although it is surely arbitrary to group it together with the Nsom. dialects (instead of putting it with the other Ben. dialects) since it presupposes a disregard of its morphological structure.

(E) Methodological questions

Now a few words about the method: if one finds two or more lexems for a certain meaning in a language family, which has not been recorded in the past, it is arbitrary to regard one of them as an innovation; for instance in Somali there are two lexems for stone, i.e. dagax (and similar forms) and sidii; Ehret and Nux Cali want to consider shid a innovation (see Ehret and Nux Cali's hand-out), but this is an arbitrary act, because nobody can say (as the older linguistic stages of Somali are not recorded) which of the both is really the older one. Of course dagax is an older lexem, but the fact that in Mat., there is no lexem shid for stone (sidii and shidii mean in Mat. grindstone and to grind respectively) does not mean at all that Mat., had
never possessed it; theoretically it can have lost the meaning of stone because replaced by *daqax*, which would be in that case the innovation. Thus to consider *shid* or *shagax* an innovation is no scientific operation, but an arbitrary act. Equally arbitrary is the disqualification of some isoglosses (like for instance the development of *d* or the occurrence of the palatalization and sonorization laws in the respective dialects), only because their existence does not fit into the conception of the author. The motivation for their being disregarded, their being the result of contact, cannot be taken seriously, because every isogloss presupposes contact and a scientific classification of dialects must be always based on isoglosses.

Finally I would like to add: as Ekret and Noon Cali were unfortunately absent at the Congress, it was not possible to discuss all the points criticized here with them; nevertheless the authors are invited to reply to the criticism contained in this paper about their classification.

NOTES

1. The authors have probably chosen their procedure for avoiding the use of clan names (most names of dialects in Somalia correspond in fact, as shown above, to names of clans). The Somali do not like to be reminded, that in their history clans played an important role because of political reasons. But for a scientific classification of the Somali dialects the use of clan names is unavoidable, because only the usual names of the dialects are really clear and, if necessary, verifiable.

2. The greatest part of the Somali population consists of nomads.

3. Unfortunately Ekret and Noon Cali do not substantiate in the hand-out with isoglosses their supposition that *ji* and *bayso* constitute a common branch.

4. The only postposition of *ji* is -1 (positive marker); which perhaps is connected etymologically with the cotative postposition of *bayso* -se (with).

5. In *dhol* also there are plurals by reduplication, like in *bayso*. The *bayso* plural suffixes -mool/-mol/-ool and -jool could be connected with the morpheme -yaal of *den*, *hay* and *dab*. But in *ji*, the only plural morpheme is -daa, and such a form was not found, at least to date in *bayso*.

6. This law must be older than the older palatalization laws, because otherwise the *k* of *bekee* (*Tn. bhebe water*) would have been palatalized instead of being spirantized, as is the case.

7. The loss of *k* in *bayso* fully agrees with its sound laws, cf. *bayso*:

   - ab- (to have, hold), *k*ab-
   - ub- (to pour), *k*ub-, cf. Somali *qub-* (to pour away),
   - boul (hundred), *k*ool-, cf. Somali *bog*.

8. Here not the Somali dialect *Af-Serre*, which we have classified as *Digo*, is meant, but a homogeneous Oromo dialect.

9. In the seventies of this century the Somali Government established a colony of Northern Somalis (mainly from the regions *Nagoyo* and *Togbar*) in the district of Barawa, but according to my knowledge they still speak the dialect of their region, i.e. *NiSom* in its proper sense.

10. In spite of their heterogeneity Ga., Aj., and Ab. form a certain unity, which I termed here *Northern Benaadig*.

REFERENCES


References


MAPS
1. Distribution of the Dialectal Groups
2. Northern Somali Dialects
3. Benadir Dialects
4. Nary Dialects
5. Ashraaf and Digil Dialects
6. Linguistic Minorities of Somalia