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University of Gothenburg offers
[net-based distance courses](#) in Somali grammar & linguistics
for mother tongue speakers of Somali.
Courses are free of charge for Norwegian and EU citizens.

WEERAYNTA AFKA SOOMAAALIGA

Morgan Nilsson

30.12.2022

Readings

Selected chapters from:

Kroeger. 2005. *Analyzing grammar*.

Available as e-book through our university library.

Puglielli, Gebert & Antinucci. 1981. *Sintassi della lingua somala*.

Downloadable from <https://arcadia.sba.uniroma3.it/handle/2307/802>

Just for reference if someone likes to read in Italian.

Raabbi. 2014. *Buugga Weedhaynta*.

Can only be purchased in Hargeysa. Selected pages as pdf file in Canvas.

Saeed. 1999. *Somali*.

Only available as printed book. Selected pages as pdf file in Canvas.

Waasuge. 1990. *Weeraynta Soomaaliga*.

Downloadable from <https://arcadia.sba.uniroma3.it/handle/2307/2513>

Edited version downloadable from <http://morgannilsson.se/Waasuge1990Weeraynta.pdf>

Zholkovskij. 1979. *Somali syntax*.

Available as pdf file in Canvas: <https://canvas.gu.se/courses/57164/files/6253147?wrap=1>

Selected Articles.

Contents

Readings	1
Contents.....	2
Unit 1 – What is Syntax?	6
1. Key concepts	6
1. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	8
Unit 2 – Nodes, Semantic Roles & Grammatical Relations.....	9
2. Key concepts	9
2.1 Hierarchies & Nodes	9
2.2 Arguments	10
2.3 Semantic Roles	11
2.4 Grammatical Relations.....	11
2.5 Well-formedness	13
2. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	14
Unit 3 – Lexical Entries and Well-Formed Clauses.....	15
3. Key Concepts.....	15
3.1 The Lexicon.....	15
3.2 Argument Structure.....	15
3.3 Valence Alternations	16
3.4 Oblique Arguments and Adjuncts	17
3. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	17
Unit 4 – Noun Phrases & Word Order.....	19
4. Key Concepts.....	19
4.1 Determiners, Complements and Adjuncts.....	19
4.2 Inalienable Possession	21
4.3 Recursion.....	21
4.4 Somali noun phrases with numerals.....	22
4.5 Multiple Adjuncts	22
4. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	24

Unit 5 – Case, Gender & Agreement.....	25
5. Key Concepts.....	25
5.1 Grammatical relations of NPs.....	25
5.2 Case.....	26
5.4 Agreement.....	27
5.5 Subject pronouns.....	28
5.6 Focus and reduced verb forms.....	29
5.7 Possession → 4.2.....	29
5. Questions, Exercises & Assignments.....	31
Unit 6 – Pronouns, Particle Phrases & Phrase Order.....	32
6. Key Concepts.....	32
5.3 Gender.....	32
6.1 Pronouns.....	32
6.2 Proximity.....	33
6.3 Reflexive pronouns.....	33
6.4 Emphatic pronouns.....	34
6.5 Agreement of Pronouns.....	34
6.6 The gap in Somali object pronoun inventory.....	35
6.7 Particle Phrases.....	35
6.8 Subject pronouns in subclauses.....	35
6.9 Phrase Order.....	35
6. Questions, Exercises & Assignments.....	36
Unit 7 – Verb Phrases and Clitics.....	37
7. Key Concepts.....	37
7.1 The verb phrase (VP).....	37
7.3 Clitics.....	37
7. Questions, Exercises & Assignments.....	38
Unit 8 – Tense, Aspect and Mood.....	40
8. Key Concepts.....	40
8.1 Tense.....	40
8.2 Aspect.....	40

8.3 Mood and Modality	42
8. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	43
Unit 9 – Non-verbal semantic predicates	46
9. Key Concepts	46
9.1 The semantic predicate.....	46
9.1.1 Equative clauses	47
9.1.2 Attributive clauses	47
9.1.3 Other verbs in equative and attributive clauses.....	48
9.1.4 Locative clauses.....	48
9.1.5 Possessive clauses	49
9.1.6 Existential clauses	49
9.2 Predicate adjuncts	49
9.3 Impersonal clauses.....	50
9.4 Indefinite agent clauses.....	50
9. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	50
Unit 10 – Sentence types, Negation & Word order	52
10. Key Concepts	52
10.1 Sentence types	52
10.2 Basic word order	52
10.3 Commands.....	53
10.4 Questions.....	53
10.4.1 Yes-No questions	53
10.4.2 Content questions	54
10.4.3 Alternative questions.....	54
10.4.4 Tag questions.....	54
10.5 Negation.....	54
10. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	55
Unit 11 – Coordination & Subordination	56
11. Key Concepts	56
11.1 Relations between clauses.....	56
11.2 Coordination.....	57

11.3 Subordination	57
11.4 Nominal subclauses	58
11.5 Characteristics of subclauses	58
11.6 Classes of verbs and their preferred complement clauses	59
11.7 Direct and indirect quotations	59
11.8 Adjunct or adverbial clauses	60
11. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	60
Unit 12 – Relative clauses	62
12. Key Concepts	62
12.1	62
12. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	65
Unit 13 – Valence-changing operations	69
13. Key Concepts	69
13.1	69
13. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	75
Unit 14 – Information packaging & Word Order	77
14. Key Concepts	77
14.1	77
14. Questions, Exercises & Assignments	80

Unit 1 – What is Syntax?

Read:

Kroeger (2005), p. 1–6 + 7 + 26–38

Zholkovskij. 1979. *Somali Syntax*. Appendix 6. Word classes, pp. 291-208.

Skim through:

Waasuge. 1990. *Weeraynta Soomaaliga*.

Downloadable from <https://arcadia.sba.uniroma3.it/handle/2307/2513>

Edited version downloadable from <http://morgannilsson.se/Waasuge1990Weeraynta.pdf>

1. Key concepts

Every expression has

Form + Meaning + Function (use)

Form + Betydelse + Funktion

This is true for all levels of language:

Sentence	Mening	Hawraar
Clause	Sats	Weer
Phrase	Fras	Oraah
Word	Ord	Eray
Morpheme	Morfem	Morfiim

Word classes = Parts of speech = Syntactic word-level categories = Lexical categories, e.g. Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives

Ordklasser = Syntaktiska ordkategorier, t.ex. verb, substantiv, adjektiv

Jaadadka Erayada (Qaybaha hadalka)

Phrasal categories, e.g. Noun phrase (NP), Verb phrase (VP), Prepositions phrase (PP), Adjective phrase (AdjP), Adverb phrase (AdvP)

Typer av fraser

Jaadadka oraahyada

Head versus dependents

Huvudord och bestämmningar

Eray-madaxeed iyo ...

Complements are dependents that are specifically selected by the head.

Prescriptive versus descriptive grammar

(Sentence) Constituents = **Satsdelar** = Konstituenten

= **Xubnaha Weerta** (Qaybaha Weerta)

Lexical ambiguity versus Structural ambiguity

Lexikal tvetydighet vs. **Strukturell tvetydighet**

Å ena sidan kan ett ord göra att en mening blir tvetydig, å andra sidan kan ibland meningens grammatiska struktur göra att den blir tvetydig.

Hierarchy – a clause (a higher level unit) consists of phrases (lower level units) and phrases consist of words (at an even lower level). This is shown in tree diagrams.

Hierarki – en sats (enhet på högre nivå) består av fraser (enheter på lägre nivå) och fraserna består av ord (på en ännu lägre nivå). Dessa visas i träd-diagram.

Grammatical Relations – the relations between the constituents, e.g. the predicate is the head of the clause and the predicate verb has different relations to different noun phrases, one is usually a subject, another one might be an object, an adverbial etc.

Grammatiska relationer – förhållandet mellan konstituenten (satsdelar)

1. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

1.1. Vad är syntax?

1.2. Vilka ordklasser har somaliskan? Ge två exempel på ord i varje ordklass. Hur kan man avgöra vilken ordklass ett ord hör till?

1.3. Vilka "europeiska ordklasser" behövs inte i somaliskan? Varför inte?

1.4. Vilka satsdelar har somaliskan? Ge ett exempel på en sats som innehåller alla typer av satsdelar. Analysera satsen.

1.5. Ge ett exempel på en kort somalisk mening som kan förstås på två olika sätt, s.k. **strukturell ambiguitet** eller tvetydighet. Förklara vilka de två betydelserna är och försök förklara **varför** meningen är tvetydig. (Det får alltså inte vara något specifikt ord i meningen som har två betydelser, då blir det lexikal ambiguitet i stället.)

1.6. Översätt exempelmeningarna nummer 7 a-f och sätt ett snedstreck mellan stasdelarna på samma sätt som man har gjort i 8 a-f. (sid. 28-29)

1.7. Översätt exempelmeningarna 10a, 10c, 12a och se om man kan flytta runt satsdelarna på olika sätt och att man får olika möjliga ordföljder. (sid. 30-31)

1.8. Översätt exempel 13a och ersätt sedan olika satsdelar med passande frågeord. (sid 31)

Unit 2 – Nodes, Semantic Roles & Grammatical Relations

Read: Kroeger (2005), p. 38–47 + 51–63

Skim through:

Mansur & Puglielli. 1999. *Barashad Naxwaha af Soomaaliga*, p.

Downloadable from <https://arcadia.sba.uniroma3.it/handle/2307/2171>

2. Key concepts

2.1 Hierarchies & Nodes

Mother node – a dominating node at an immediately higher level.

Daughter node – a dominated node at an immediately lower level.

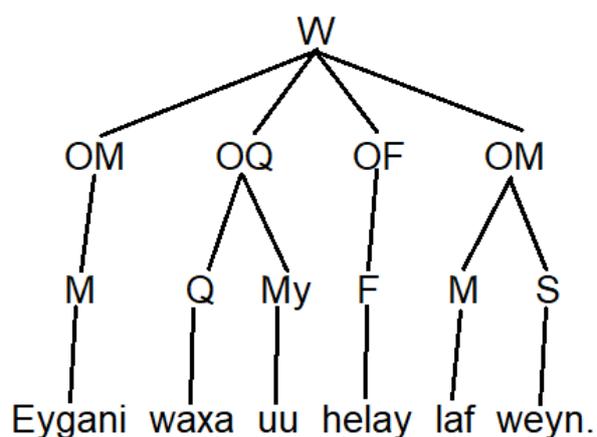
Sister nodes – two nodes at the same level with a common dominating mother node.

Terminal node – a node that does not dominate any daughter nodes.

Terminal element – the word dominated by the terminal node

Sentence Consituents = **Xubnaha weerta** – a string of words that are together dominated by a common node at some higher level.

Syntactic categories = **Word classes** = **Jaadadka erayada** (Qaybaha hadalka) – function as terminal node labels



Somali has **OQ** – **oraah qurubeed** – sentence particle phrase – which English and Swedish do not have.

Somali does not have PP – prepositions phrases. Instead Somali prepositions are part of the VP – verb phrase / OF – oraah faleed

Phrase structure rules

$W \rightarrow (OM) OQ (OM) OF (OM)$

A clause (W - weer) consists of an **obligatory particle phrase** (OQ) and an **obligatory verb phrase** (OF). There may also be a number of **optional noun phrases** (OM). The **particle phrase always comes before the verb phrase**.

$OM \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} M \\ My \end{array} \right\} (S)$

A noun phrase consists of an **obligatory noun or pronoun**, which may be followed by an **optional adjective**.

$OQ \rightarrow Q My$

A particle phrase consists of an **sentence particle** which is followed by a **pronoun**.

$OF \rightarrow (H) F$

A verb phrase consists of an **obligatory verb** which may be preceded by an **optional preposition**.

2.2 Arguments

A predicate needs a specific number of noun phrases in order to build clauses that make sense.

ORDAA + hal OM *Farasku waa uu ordayaa.*

CUNAA + laba OM *Farasku waxa uu cunayaa cawska.*

SIIYAA + saddex OM *Beerfaluhi waxa uu faraska siinayaa cawska.*

2.3 Semantic Roles

There is a large number of different functions that a noun phrase may fill in specific sentences. These functions are called **SEMANTIC ROLES**. This term clearly indicates that these roles are based on the meaning of the noun phrase in a specific sentence.

Agent

Experiencer

Recipient

Beneficiary

Instrument (Tool)

Theme

Patient

Stimulus

Location (Position)

Source

Goal

Path

Accompaniment

(You most probably recognize many of these labels from the traditional division of adverbials into different types.)

2.4 Grammatical Relations

Besides the meaning of the different noun phrases in a clause, we are interested in the grammatical relations between the predicate and its noun phrases.

The arguments are subdivided into **SUBJECT**, **OBJECT**, and **OBLIQUE**.

The traditional distinction between object and adverbial is not strictly grammatically relevant, since that distinction is not expressed in a clear grammatical way, e.g. through some endings or some small function words. The traditional distinction between object and adverbial is a somewhat unfortunate mixture of grammatical and semantic distinctions.

Let us therefore stick to grammar alone and leave semantics aside!

An highly relevant grammatical distinction can be noticed between

- noun phrases that are subject-marked, and
- noun phrases that are not subject-marked.

Beerfaluhu waxa uu faraska siinayaa cawska.

Another highly relevant grammatical distinction is between

- noun phrases that **determine** the form of the predicate verb, and

Cali (M) *ayaa faraska siinaya* (M) *cawska.*

Sahro (F) *ayaa faraska siinaysa* (F) *cawska.*

- noun phrases that **do not affect** the form of the predicate verb.

Sahro ayaa faraska (M) *siinaysa* (F) *cawska.*

Sahro ayaa bisadda (F) *siinaysa* (F) *caanaha.*

Another grammatically relevant distinction that is not marked in the noun phrase, but in the verb phrase, is the distinction between

- non-subject noun phrases connected directly to the predicate verb

Cali waxa uu Sahro siiyay warqaddan.

- non-subject noun phrases connected to the predicate verb by a preposition.

Cali waxa uu Sahro u diray warqaddan.

Based on these three grammatical distinctions, we may distinguish three different kinds of arguments:

Subject – the argument that determines the form of the predicate verb. In addition, this argument is often subject-marked, but not always.

Object – an argument, other than the subject, that is directly connected to the verb, without any preposition in the verb phrase.

Oblique – an argument, other than the subject, that is connected to the verb through a preposition found in the verb phrase.

Some verbs take two objects. That is the case if there are three necessary noun phrases connected to a verb that is not accompanied by a preposition, e.g.

Beerfaluhu waxa uu faraska siinayaa cawska.

The verb *siiyaa* requires a subject and two objects, but no oblique, since *siiyaa* is not used with any preposition. (The addition of the preposition *u* would make the clause ungrammatical: **Beerfaluhu waxa uu faraska u siinayaa cawska.*)

Besides **ARGUMENTS** (subjects, objects & obliques), which are necessary in order to build a sensible clause with any specific verb, there are other noun phrases that can be added optionally to clauses. Such optional noun phrases are called **ADJUNCTS**. Adjuncts are never obligatory.

The number of arguments is always limited to the exact amount required by the verb, whereas the number of adjuncts is not limited by grammar.

Adjuncts are often subcategorized based on their semantic roles (much like traditional adverbial phrases), e.g.

- time adjuncts
- place adjuncts
- manner adjuncts
- etc.

On exclusively grammatical grounds (disregarding semantics), the **noun phrases** in a clause can be sub-divided into a **subject, object(s), oblique(s)** and **adjuncts** (instead of the subject, direct object, indirect object, and adverbials in traditional grammar).

2.5 Well-formedness

GRAMMATICAL WELL-FORMEDNESS must be carefully distinguished from logical or semantic well-formedness. In syntax, we are only interested in grammatical well-formedness. Sentences may have strange meanings or no real meaning at all, but still be syntactically (= grammatically) well-formed.

*I am two years **older from** my sister.*

Ungrammatical – Our knowledge about grammar tells us that this is not okay.

*I am two years **older than** my mother.*

Grammatically well-formed – but our knowledge about the world tells us that the content of this sentence is somehow wrong.

*I am two **years smarter** than my brother.*

Grammatically well-formed – but our knowledge about the meaning of individual words tells us that this sentence is semantic non-sense.

2. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

2.1. Suggest two more verbs that require one argument, two other verbs that require two arguments and two other verbs that require three arguments, in addition to those mentioned in section 2.2 above. Use everyday verbs and write a simple example clause for each verb.

2.2. Suggest suitable translations of the terms for semantic roles listed in section 2.3 above. Also give an example sentence for each semantic role and highlight the relevant noun phrase with boldface.

2.3. Build two simple Somali sentences with three argument: **a subject and two objects**, but no oblique and no adjunct.

2.4. Build two simple Somali sentences with **a subject, one object and one oblique**, but no adjunct.

2.5. Build two simple Somali sentences with **one oblique and one adjunct**. Subject & object may be added if suitable.

2.6. Build two simple Somali sentences with **one object and two adjuncts**. A subject may be added if suitable, but no oblique.

2.7. Translate the three sentences in section 2.5 (Well-formedness) into Somali. Give one more Somali example of each kind of ill-formed sentence, where two should still be grammatically well-formed, but odd.

Unit 3 – Lexical Entries and Well-Formed Clauses

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 5, pages 66–83.

3. Key Concepts

3.1 The Lexicon

The **lexicon** is the mental storage of a speaker's vocabulary and certain grammatical information about the individual words.

A **lexical item** is an individual word in the lexicon.

A **lexical entry** is an individual word in the lexicon together with all the necessary information about that word, e.g. pronunciation, meaning, word class (=syntactic category), irregular inflection (e.g. *il*, pl. *indho*), as well as syntactic information about how it can be combined with other words into phrases and clauses.

3.2 Argument Structure

In the lexicon, every verb needs to be specified for its argument structure. Both the argument's semantic role and its grammatical relation to the verb need to be specified, e.g.

siiyaa + AGENT=**SUBJ** + THEME=**OBJ** + RECIPIENT=**OBJ₂**

... **Turkiga** *ayaa* **deeq waxbarasho** *siinaya* **500 arday** *sanad walba*...

u diraa + AGENT=**SUBJ** + THEME=**OBJ** + RECIPIENT=**OBL**

Wuxuu **tacsi** *u diray* **ehelada dadkii ku geeriyooday dagaalkaasi**...

An **intransitive** verb is a verb that does not take any object, e.g. *hurdaa*.

A **transitive** verb is a verb that requires one object, e.g. *u diraa*.

A **ditransitive** verb is a verb that requires two objects, e.g. *siiyaa*.

Terms or **direct arguments** are the subject and the object(s).

The **valence** of a verb is the number of terms or direct arguments that the verb takes, e.g. the valence of *u diraa* is TWO (SUBJ+OBJ), whereas the valence of *siiyaa* is THREE (SUBJ+OBJ+OBJ) and the valence of *hurdaa* is ONE (SUBJ).

Some linguists also include the oblique arguments in the valence, not only the subject and object(s). This way of treating valence can be referred to as SEMANTIC VALENCE.

3.3 Valence Alternations

Some languages don't always explicitly express all the arguments, even if they are semantically at hand in the situation that is describe by a clause.

English and Swedish can suppress (not specify) the object if it is not relevant to the situation, e.g. *I am eating*. Somali, on the other hand, tends to insert the indefinite word *wax* in such contexts, e.g. *Wax baan cunayaa*.

Actually, when an object is suppressed in Somali, i.e. not expressed explicitly by any word, that object is very specific and well established through the preceding context. This is connected to the fact that Somali doesn't use or even have clitic (unstressed) 3rd person object pronouns corresponding to English *her, him, it, them* or Swedish *honom, henne, den, det, dem*. Therefore, when a transitive Somali verb is used in a clause without an object, that absence needs to be interpreted as expressing a specific object, and therefore translated into English with one of the object pronouns, e.g. *Maryan ma aragtay? Haa, waan arkay*. 'Yes, I saw **her**.'

Furthermore, languages like Italian and Arabic can suppress (not explicitly have a word for) the subject, e.g. *Vengo*. English, Swedish and Somali, on the other hand, usually have a subject word, at least a clitic (short, unstressed) subject pronoun (*aan, aad, uu, ay, la, aannu, aynu, aydin*), e.g. *I'm coming; Jag kommer; Waan imanayaa*. Somali can however suppress the subject in questions and negative statements, e.g. *Cali ma aragtay? Maya, ma arkin*.

This kind of absence of pronouns is generally referred to as **pro-drop**.

These variations are so called **surface variations**. The semantic structure is stable, but the syntactic "surface" structures exhibit variation.

Another type of valence alternations can be observed between different closely related verbs, but here the alternations express semantic differences between the different interrelated verbs.

Biyuhu way karayaan. theme=**subj** + *karaa*
Iyagu waxay karinayaan *biyaha*. agent=**subj** + *kariyaa* + theme=**obj**

This type of verb pairs are based on the addition of the suffix *-i-*.

The simple, basic verb is **intransitive**, the derived verb with *-i-* is **transitive**.

English and Swedish differ a lot from Somali, since the same verb is often used in both meanings and both syntactic constructions.

The water is boiling. *Vattnet kokar.*
They are boiling the water. *De kokar vattnet.*

A less frequent way of creating this kind of pairs of verbs in Somali is the suffix *-m-*, but this suffix has the opposite effect, it changes a transitive verb into an intransitive.

Ardayga ayaa bilaabay waxbarashadiisa. agent=subj + bilaabaa + theme=obj
 Casharku wuu bilaabmay. theme=subj + bilaabmaa

The simple, basic verb is **transitive**, the derived verb with *-m-* is **intransitive**.

3.4 Oblique Arguments and Adjuncts

Oblique arguments are "connected" to the verb through a preposition that "points" to the oblique argument. They are a necessary part of the verbs argument structure because they are a natural part of the situation that the verb describes.

Dawladda ayaa foostadii biyaha ah ku iibsan jirtay laba doollar...



Certain verbs may also be used with two prepositions and two obliques.

Dad baa beero lacag kaga iibsan doona dawladda.



Adjuncts, on the other hand, do not have any closer connection to the specific situation that the verb describes. Adjuncts can be freely added to most verbs and clauses. Very common adjuncts are those that express **time**, **place** and **manner**, e.g.

Sannadkii 1947kii ayaa la dilay Sheekh Bashiir.

3. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

3.1. Translate the sentences (13a,b), (16a,b) and (17a,c) on page 71. Explain the structural difference between the two sentences in English and Somali.

3.2 Think of two Somali verbs that are **intransitive**. Write a simple sentence with each verb. Don't choose verbs that have been mentioned in the text above!

3.3 Think of two Somali verbs that are **transitive**. Write a simple sentence with each verb. Don't choose verbs that have been mentioned in the text above!

3.4 Think of two Somali verbs that are **ditransitive**. Write a simple sentence with each verb. Don't choose verbs that have been mentioned in the text above!

3.5 Think of one Somali verbs that is **intransitive**, but also takes an **oblique** argument. Write a simple sentence with this verb. Don't choose a verb that has been mentioned in the text above!

3.6 Think of one Somali verbs that is **transitive**, but also takes an **oblique** argument. Write a simple sentence with this verb. Don't choose a verb that has been mentioned in the text above!

3.7 Repeat all the eight sentences in 3.2–3.5 and add an **adjunct** to each sentence.

3.8 Give three **pairs of verbs** where one is transitive and the other is intransitive. Two pairs should make use of the morpheme *-i-*, and one pair should make use of the morpheme *-m-*. Write short sentences with each verb, 6 sentences in total. For each sentence, write in parentheses if it is transitive or intransitive. Don't choose verbs that have been mentioned in the text above!

3.9 Choose three verbs that you have not mentioned before. Write down their argument structure according to the pattern:

u diraa + AGENT=SUBJ + THEME=OBJ + RECIPIENT=OBL

Also write a simple sentence that supports your argument structure template.

Unit 4 – Noun Phrases & Word Order

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 6, pages 87–98.

Add:

mass nouns, measure words, itemizers (xabbo), se Kroeger § 8.1.2
numerative case

4. Key Concepts

Determiners, Complements, Adjuncts

4.1 Determiners, Complements and Adjuncts

In previous courses we have not made this distinction. We have just talked about endings (suffixes) that are added to nouns, and about modifiers (Sw. attribut, faahfaahiyayaasha) that can be added to nouns in order to create longer noun phrases.

In linguistics it is however common practice to make a distinction between these three categories:

Determiners are not so important to discuss in Somali, since they are endings that are added to the nouns (definite, demonstrative and possessive suffixes). (In English and Swedish they are independent words, and their role in word order is a complex issue.)

baska, baskii, baskan, baskooda

Complements are additional words that are strictly chosen by the head noun itself, in similar ways as verbs choose their complements.

Adjuncts (or **modifiers**) are additional words that can be **added freely** to any noun, just like they can be added freely to any verb.

As a rule, the Somali noun phrase starts with the head noun (and its determiner endings) and all complements and adjuncts follow after the head noun. There are very few exceptions to this principle.

Complements and adjuncts are made up of nouns, adjectives or subclauses with a verb. Somali does not have any preposition phrases (prepositions belong to verb phrases). Therefore there are no such complements or adjuncts in Somali.

Juxtaposition – Nouns as Complements and Adjuncts

When a noun is added as an adjunct or complement after a head noun, there is usually no morphological suffix to mark this relation.

When two nouns are simply placed together in a phrase, they are said to be in **juxtaposition** with each other.

Juxtaposition is often used to express possession or association between two nouns. In this kind of construction the head noun does not have any special requirements on the other noun, which is then an adjunct.

qoyska Xasan, baarlamaanka Soomaaliya, madaxweynaha dalkaas

When the second noun in a juxtaposition fills a grammatical relation similar to that of the subject or object of a verb, such nouns are generally considered to be complements.

Juxtaposition can also serve to express the agent or the patient/theme of the action that is expressed by the head noun. In this kind of construction the head noun has special requirements on the other noun, which is then a complement.

maamulaha dugsiga (waxa uu maamulaa dugsiga)

The school can be said to be the theme both in relation to the verb *maamulaa* and to the noun *maamule*.

In the following example the complement noun has the semantic role of the agent.

qosolka ardayda iyo macallinka (ardayda iyo macallinku waa ay qoslayaan)

baahida korontada 'the need for electricity' – the electricity would be the object/theme of a verb that would correspond to the noun *baahida*.

baahida ciidanka 'the army's needs' – the army would be the subject/experiencer of a verb that would correspond to the noun *baahida*.

Adjectives as Adjuncts

gaari cusub,

An adjective may be preceded by an intensifier which is then part of an adjective phrase, e.g. *aad u fiican* 'very nice'.

baaskiil aad u fiican

Noun phrases as Adjuncts

baaskiil qurux badan, qofka ugu timo dheer adduunka

Subclauses (with a verb) as Adjuncts

baaskiil buluug ah

Adjectives and subclauses as Complements are not common in Somali.

4.2 Inalienable Possession

Relations between two persons that can never be changed, or usually are not changed, are expressed in slightly different ways than other types of possession or relation.

Words like *hooyo*, *aabbe*, *walaal*, *eeddo*, *awoowe* take shorter possessive ending than other nouns.

hooyaday (**hooyadayda*), *aabbahaa* (**aabbahaaga*)

but *gabartayda*, *wiilkaaga*

They can not be followed by an adjunct expressing the “owner”. Instead they must be followed by a possessive suffix that points to the “owner” that occurs before the head noun.

Xasan hooyadiis (**hooyada Xasan*), *Maryan aabbaheed* (**aabbaha Maryan*)

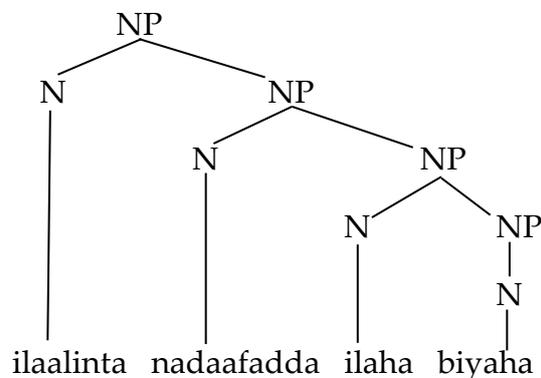
but *gabarta Xasan* = *Xasan gabartiisa*, *wiilka Maryan* = *Maryan wiilkeeda*

4.3 Recursion

Recursion is a phenomenon in syntax that means that a rule may be repeated indefinitely. This happens if the same element occurs on both sides of the arrow.

$NP \rightarrow N (NP)$

A noun phrase may consist of a noun followed by another noun phrase, which in turn may consist of a noun followed by another noun phrase etc.



4.4 Somali noun phrases with numerals

Noun phrases with numerals as their heads have a different structure. The numeral takes all the determiner endings, and the following noun (what is counted) cannot take any such endings. Instead it has to be in the COUNTING FORM (or the NUMERATIVE form). Feminine nouns with the plural ending *-o* has a special counting form ending in *-ood*. All other nouns use the singular form as their counting form.

<i>bil, bisha, pl. bilo</i>	<i>shan bilood</i>	FEMININE
<i>hooyo, hooyada, hooyooyin</i>	<i>shan hooyo</i>	FEMININE
<i>aabbe, aabbaha, aabbayaal</i>	<i>shan aabbe</i>	MASCULINE
<i>bas, baska, basas</i>	<i>shan bas</i>	MASCULINE
<i>albaab, albaabka, albaabbo</i>	<i>shan albaab</i>	MASCULINE

4.5 Multiple Adjuncts

In Somali, a noun can only be directly followed by **one** adjunct. When there is a need to add more than one adjuncts, a conjunction must be used before the second, third etc. adjunct. That conjunction is either *oo* or *ee*. The choice between *oo* and *ee* is a complicated issue that has been discussed by several scholars.

Review the chapter about Noun Phrases in Mansur & Puglielli's (1999) [*Barashada naxwaha af Soomaaliga*](#), p. 192–202. Also read the pages 225–228 about *oo* and *ee*.

Also Saeed (1993) discusses *oo* and *ee* in his grammar on pages 246–253.

Proper name + *oo* + adjunct (+ *oo* + adjunct)

Waxaan arkay Cali oo kubbad cayaaraya.

Indefinite noun + adjunct + *oo* + adjunct (+ *oo* + adjunct)

War-mooge waxa uu ahaa nin xun oo naxariis daran oo dadku neceb yihiin.

With definite nouns it is important to distinguish between two different kinds of adjuncts. Descriptive adjuncts only give some additional information about a person or object that we have already identified and know who or what it is. A defining adjunct, on the other hand gives additional information about a still not identified person or object, and it is exactly this additional information that helps us identify the person or object referred to by the head noun.

Definite noun + *oo* + descriptive adjunct (+ *oo* + descriptive adjunct)

Warbaahinta dalka Iswiidhan waxay sheegayaan in ninka oo 39 sano jir ah uu ka soo jeedo Uzbekistan.

Definite noun + defining adjunct (+ *ee* + defining adjunct)

...*ninka* waallan *ee* xukuma dalka Eriteriya...

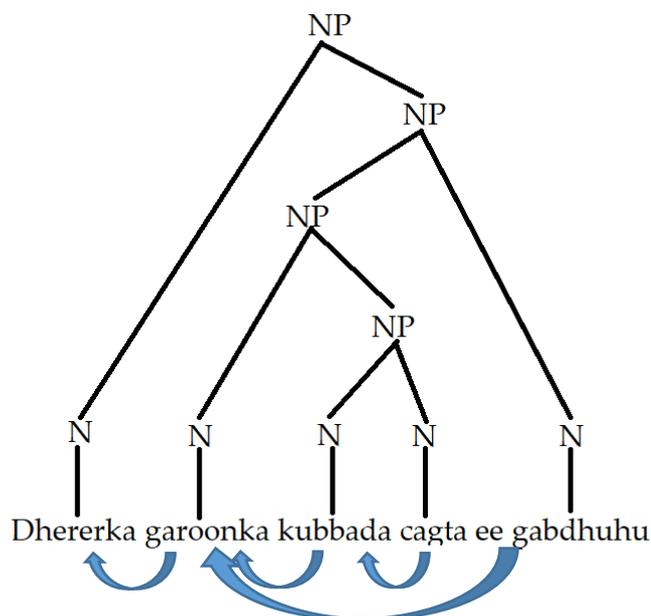
Waxayna la kulmeen Guddoomiyaha Baarlamaanka dalkaa oo ah *ninka* 2aad *ee* dalka Iswiidhan...

A summary of these rules is given in the following table.

If the head noun is	a definite noun, e.g. <i>ninka</i>	a proper name, e.g. <i>Cali</i>	an indefinite noun, e.g. <i>nin</i>
the adjunct describes the noun	use <i>oo</i> before every adjunct	use <i>oo</i> before every adjunct	
the adjunct defines the noun	add first adjunct directly to the noun and use <i>ee</i> before subsequent adjuncts		add first adjunct directly to the noun and use <i>oo</i> before subsequent adjuncts

Every adjunct has to point to the directly preceding head noun. In order to point to another word, further away, *oo* or *ee* needs to be used.

Dhererka garoonka kubbada cagta ee gabdhuhu waa 79.25 m.



4. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

4.1. xxx

4.2 Give three examples of a noun phrase containing a complement that would be the subject of the corresponding verb, such as *qosolka ardayda*, *baahida ciidanka*. Also write the sentence with the verb. **Förtydliga instruktionerna!!**

4.3 Give three other examples of a noun phrase containing a complement that would be the object of the corresponding verb, such as *maamulaha dugsiya*, *baahida korontada*. Also write the sentence with the verb. **Förtydliga instruktionerna!!**

4.4 Give three examples of juxtapositions that can also be expressed with the adjunct preceding the head noun, which is followed by a possessive determiner suffix. Underline the head noun, e.g. baabuurka Xasan, Xasan baabuur-kiisa. At least one example should not express possession.

4.5 Give three examples of noun phrases where a juxtaposition is not possible, and the only possible construction is that the adjunct precedes the head noun, which is followed by a possessive determiner suffix. Only one or two of the examples should express possession, the other ones should express some other kind of meaning.

4.6 Given three other examples of a noun phrase containing
Proper name + oo + adjunct (+ oo + adjunct)

4.7 Given three other examples of a noun phrase containing
Indefinite noun + adjunct + oo + adjunct (+ oo + adjunct)

4.8 Given three other examples of a noun phrase containing
Definite noun + oo + descriptive adjunct (+ oo + descriptive adjunct)

4.9 Given three other examples of a noun phrase containing
Definite noun + defining adjunct (+ ee + defining adjunct)

4.10 Can you think of any exceptions to the four rules about the use of oo and ee?

Unit 5 – Case, Gender & Agreement

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 7, **Case and agreement**, pages 102–119, but you don't need to read § 7.1.3 (Split ergativity) and 7.2.2 (Ergative agreement systems).

Zholkovskij. 1979. Somali Syntax, Appendix 2. Morphological indicators of the subject, pp. 2787-278, and Appendix 3. Types of subject-predicate agreement, pp. 279-282.

+ Chapter 8: § 8.1–8.1.1 (p. 128-131)

For reference: Corbett 2022 talk and references therein

5. Key Concepts

Case, subject, object, nominative, accusative

Agreement, NP, verb, pronoun, gender, number

Focus, reduced verb forms

5.1 Grammatical relations of NPs

When a verb occurs together with its arguments and adjuncts, there is a need to express which NP plays which semantic role, i.e. what is the grammatical relation between the verb and each one of the NPs in the clause. Above all it is important to know which NP is the subject (and which is the object) of the verb.

Languages have three important strategies to show these relations between the verb and the NPs.

– **WORD ORDER.** This is the most important tool in English and Swedish. The subject usually comes before the verb, and the object after the verb.

In most Somali sentences, the subject precedes both the verb and the object, but this is not a strict rule. Somali sentences may very well end with the subject. So there is no way to be sure about the grammatical roles of NPs in Somali only based on the word order.

– **CASE FORMS.** This is the most important tool in Classical Arabic, Latin and Slavic languages. The words in the subject NP have different endings when they function as the subject and the object.

In Somali the last word of the subject NP is usually marked with one of the three **SUBJECT CASE ENDINGS**, *-u*, *-i*, or *-aa*.

– **AGREEMENT.** This is a very important tool in a very large number of languages. Many languages have different forms of the verb when the subject NP is singular and plural. Some languages, like Somali, also have different verb forms when the singular subject is feminine and masculine.

It is also important to notice that a variation is often possible between **GRAMMATICAL** and **SEMANTIC AGREEMENT** between the subject NP and the verb. Grammatical agreement means that the verb agrees with the grammatical form of the head noun in the subject NP. Semantic agreement means that the verb agrees with the meaning of the word(s) in the subject NP.

In Somali two more tools are quite important.

– **SUBJECT PRONOUNS.** The subject is usually expressed by a subject pronoun, even if it is at the same time expressed by an NP.

– **FOCUS PARTICLES.** The subject is usually the focused NP if there is no subject pronoun in a main clause. The predicate verb is in the reduced form when the subject is focused.

In some languages prepositions at the beginning of NPs help identify the semantic roles of these NPs.

*She gave the book **to** the student.*

This is however not a tool that works in Somali, since the prepositions are placed in the predicate VP directly in front of the verb. There is no formal way to know which NP a preposition refers to. We only know that based on the meaning in the context.

5.2 Case

If the subject NP is **focused**, the subject case endings are **not used**.

*Wiilka **baa** ordaya.*

Only if the subject is **not focused**, the subject case endings are **used**.

*Wiilku **wuu** ordayaa.*

The subject ending is a **phrasal suffix**, i.e. it is added at the end of the whole phrase, to the last word in the subject NP.

*Wiilka iyo gabadhu **way** ordayaan.*

-u is added to nouns and pronouns instead of the final -a found in the basic form.

-i is added to adjectives, pronouns, indefinite feminine nouns and some verb forms that end in a consonant.

Maalin dambe ayaa balanbaalisi ubaxii soo dul martay.

-aa is added to many verb forms ending in a vowel, and to the adjective *kasta*.

Sida Jubba oo kale ayaa bahallo wax cunaa ku jiraan webi Shabelle.

In many other instances the subject case is not marked in writing.

Isla markiiba waraabihii waxa uu ku soo boodey gabadhii.

Maxaa ay Maryan dugsiga u tagi weydey?

It should be noted that Somali, just like English and most European languages, makes a distinction between subject and object, which are marked by different cases. In many European languages as well as Arabic these two cases are called the nominative (for subjects) and the accusative (for objects). In the Somali tradition the terms nominative and accusative are not used very much.

Instead the subject case is a very common label. The other case, the one that is used in all other functions, for objects, obliques and adjuncts as well as citation form (when a word is not used in a clause, but just mentioned on its own, e.g. in a wordlist or dictionary) has been called many different things, e.g. the absolutive case, the absolute case or the base form. The base/basic form is a very good label since it tells us that this is the most widely used form, and that the subject form is “special”.

The term **absolutive** is misleading since it implies that Somali would not be a nominative–accusative language, but an ergative–absolute language, which is something completely different, which Somali is definitely not.

5.4 Agreement

The predicate verb agrees with the subject NP and takes the same gender and number form. If the subject NP is plural the verb will be plural, if it is masculine singular or feminine singular, the verb will take the same form.

Dawacadii ayaa aragtay eygii. Since *eygii* is masculine, it cannot be the subject.

Sometimes the form of the head noun of the subject NP and the meaning of the subject NP are in conflict. Then the predicate verb can often be used in two different forms, even though individual speakers may have a strong preference for one or the other form. Sources of such variation are above all collective nouns and numerals, but also masculine words for professions when used about a woman.

Sidee carruurtu xoolaha u kala raaci jirtey?

Xaggee ayaa ay carruurtu sheekada ka soo dhegeysan jireen?

Also notice that a similar kind of agreement is found in pronouns that refer back to a noun or NP.

In many other languages, also adjectives, and sometimes numerals, agree with their head noun in gender and number. This is not the case in Somali.

<i>un piccolo ragazzo</i>	<i>wiil yar</i>
<i>una piccola ragazza</i>	<i>gabar yar</i>
<i>piccoli ragazzi</i>	<i>wiilal yaryar</i>
<i>piccole ragazze</i>	<i>gabdhoo yaryar</i>

Somali adjectives may however agree in number with their head noun, but it does not seem to be an instance of grammatical agreement, but rather of semantic agreement, e.g.

<i>dad waaweyn</i>	both these nouns are singular nouns!
<i>caws dhaadheer</i>	

Add more about

Agreement in number & gender, but not in case

Grammatical or semantic agreement

Subject – Predicate agreement

Verbs agrees with subject NP

Only verbs in past/reduced subjunctive do not agree.

Noun – modifier/determiner agreement

Possessum – possessor agreement (also relational noun – its dependent)

5.5 Subject pronouns

Subject pronouns are used in most Somali clauses. The subject pronouns agree with the subject NP and thereby help identify the subject NP.

5.6 Focus and reduced verb forms

Usually the focused NP is the subject in clauses without a subject pronoun.

When a focus NP is the subject, the predicate verb must occur in the reduced form.

Gurigayga marti baa caawa joogta.

Madaxa ayaa i xanuunaya.

Gabaygan waxa curiyey Xaaji Aadan.

Dawacadii ayaa aragtay eygii.

Notice that the reduced verb forms ending in *-a*, *-ay* are both plural and masculine singular, whereas *-ta*, *-tay* is feminine singular.

The only exception is that the subject may occur between the focus particle and the predicate verb even though there is no subject pronoun. Also, the verb is the in the full form.

Maalin dambe ayaa balanbaalisi ubaxii soo dul martay.

Sida Jubba oo kale ayaa bahallo wax cunaa ku jiraan webi Shabelle.

5.7 Possession → 4.2

In Somali possession can usually be expressed through simple juxtaposition of the possessed object and the possessor.

*guriga **Sahro***

It can also be expressed through the use of a possessive suffix doubling and referring back to the possessor noun. In linguistics this is referred to as possessor agreement.

***Sahro** gurigeeda*

***aniga** walaalkay*

***Dege** walaalkiis*

Some words, above all those representing close relatives, do not allow the juxtaposition construction, but only the use of the possessive suffixes (in their short form).

The first noun may have modifiers:

Waxaan tegey magaalo hargaha aad looga jecel yahay, dahabkanna waxaa la iga dhaafsaday sacii aad iga bireyseen haraggiisii.

5. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

- 5.1 Give one example each of clauses with the four different word orders: Subject Verb Object, SOV, OSV, OVS.
- 5.2 Give examples of clauses with the subject ending -u added to words in two different word classes.
- 5.3 Give examples of clauses with the subject ending -i added to words in four different word classes.
- 5.4 Give examples of clauses with the subject ending -aa added to two different types of verb forms.
- 5.5 Give examples of clauses where no subject ending can be added to the NP. Give examples with three different word classes at the end of the NP.
- 5.6 Give examples of clauses where the same subject NP can be followed by a verb in both the singular and the plural. Explain why, and state which verb form shows grammatical and which shows semantic agreement.
- 5.7 Give examples of clauses where the same subject NP can be followed by a verb in both the masculine and the feminine form. Explain why, and state which verb form shows grammatical and which shows semantic agreement.
- 5.8 Give two different examples of positive statement clauses without a short subject pronoun where the object is focused.
- 5.9 Give an example of a focused plural NP with a verb in the reduced plural form.
- 5.10 Give another example where two different reduced forms are possible with the same subject NP due to the variation between grammatical and semantic agreement.

Unit 6 – Pronouns, Particle Phrases & Phrase Order

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 8: § 8.1–8.1.1 (p. 128-131) and § 8.2–8.2.5 (p. 135–143).

Zholkovskij. 1979. *Somali Syntax*.

Appendix 1. The rules for inserting short-form subject pronouns. pp. 269–276,

Appendix 4. Concerning the absence of a sentence particle from a sentence, 283–4,

Appendix 5. The problem of the particle *waxa*, pp. 285-290.

6. Key Concepts

pronoun, deixis, anaphora, gender, number, reflexive, reciprocal, emphatic

5.3 Gender

Somali has a two gender system, where nouns are either masculine and feminine. Only in a handful of Somali nouns biological and grammatical gender do not coincide: *sac*, *xaas* are masculine nouns with feminine biological gender. In collective nouns there is no connection between biological and grammatical gender: *haween*, *dumar* are masculine, while *carruur* is feminine.

Gender determines the inflectional patterns of nouns, such as plural formation and determiner suffixes (definite, demonstrative and possessive determiner suffixes, subject, numerative and vocative case suffixes).

Gender also determines the agreement forms of pronouns and verbs, but only in the singular. Pronouns and verbs do not distinguish between genders in the plural. They have only one plural form. This means that there is no gender agreement in the plural, and it is therefore irrelevant to discuss the gender of a plural noun. Gender is only relevant in the singular.

<i>gabarta</i>	→ SING. FEM.	<i>iyada</i>	<i>way heesaysaa</i>
<i>wiilka</i>	→ SING. MASC.	<i>isaga</i>	<i>wuu heesayaa</i>
<i>gabdhaha</i>	→ PLUR.	<i>iyaga</i>	<i>way heesayaan</i>
<i>wiilasha</i>	→ PLUR.	<i>iyaga</i>	<i>way heesayaan</i>

6.1 Pronouns

Pronouns are a special kind of NP. The reference or semantic interpretation of pronouns is not fixed. Everything depends on the context. They may refer to something in the situation, or something that has been mentioned in the text or discourse.

Deixis, or deictic use of pronouns (and certain other words, often with determiner suffixes), means pointing to something outside the discourse, something in the real world, in the **speech situation**, i.e. the time and place of the discourse, e.g.

aniga, adiga, kan, tan, kaas, taas...

hadda, halkan, halkaas...

Waar, ii keen mindidaas!

Anaphora, or anaphoric use of pronouns, means referring back to something that has been previously mentioned in the discourse or in the text. The word that one refers back to is called the **antecedent**. An anaphoric pronoun (or other word) refers back to the same referent (person, object, place...) as the antecedent.

Faadumo hooyadeed saddex maalmood ka hor ayaa ay umushay.

Sometimes the antecedent follows after the anaphoric pronoun.

Midabbadee ayaa ay kala lahaayeen dibiyadu?

Many pronouns and determiner suffixes can be used both for deixis and anaphora. The so called referential pronouns and determiners *kii, tii, kuwii* are however only used anaphorically. They cannot be used to point at an object that is present in the speech situation.

6.2 Proximity

There are different demonstrative pronouns depending on the distance to the object referred to by the pronoun (or determiner suffix).

close	<i>kan</i>	<i>tan</i>	<i>kuwan</i>
distant	<i>kaa(s)</i>	<i>taa(s)</i>	<i>kuwaa(s)</i>

It has been suggested by Ahmed Y. Hiraad (2014: 22f) that the demonstratives ending in *-aa* are the unmarked ones, and that the forms in *-aas* are used for contrast.

6.3 Reflexive pronouns

The reflexive pronoun *is* is always anaphoric. In Somali the antecedent may be in the 1st or 2nd person as well as the 3rd person, both singular and plural.

examples

The meaning is very often reciprocal if the antecedent is in the plural.

examples

In English there are different reflexive pronouns for each person (*myself, yourself, herself...*), and in Swedish the reflexive pronoun *sig* can only refer to a 3rd person antecedent. In Slavic languages the reflexive pronoun can refer to any person, just like in Somali.

Both English and Swedish have special reciprocal pronouns (*each other; varandra, varann*) that are not the same as the reflexive pronouns.

6.4 Emphatic pronouns

Light emphasis is expressed by the long forms of the personal pronouns which can be used as an addition to the short forms.

examples

Strong emphasis is expressed by certain nouns carrying the possessive determiner ending denoting the person, e.g. *laf-tayda, laf-taada, laf-tiisa, laf-teeda...*

Aniga laftayda waxa uu si adag ii weydiiyay xaaladdayda caafimaad.

Emphatic pronouns are not used anaphorically. Instead they are used together with the antecedent NP that they refer to, so to say 'doubling' it. This is referred to as **apposition**.

6.5 Agreement of Pronouns

The pronouns agree with their antecedent. They agree in number (singular or plural), and in the singular they also agree in gender (masculine or feminine).

The three forms *aan, aad, ay* are however special. They can be used with both singular and plural reference.

Somali also has exclusive and inclusive personal pronouns in the 1st person plural:

exclusive: *annaga, aannu, na, kayaga, tayada*

inclusive: *innaga, aynu, ina, keenna, teenna*

The long forms *isaga, iyada, iyaga* are mainly used to refer to persons, and only seldom to inanimate objects. Referring to objects, the demonstrative pronouns *kan, tan, kaa(s), taa(s)* are preferred.

6.6 The gap in Somali object pronoun inventory

There are no short 3rd person object pronouns in Somali that would correspond to him, her, it, them. There are only short object pronouns in the 1st and 2nd person:

i, ku, na, ina, idin

If a transitive verb is used in a clause without an object NP, this functions as an indication that a 'specific' object (in the third person) is intended, and a translation into English usually needs an object pronoun.

example

6.7 Particle Phrases

The short Somali subject pronouns *aan, aad, uu, ay, aannu, aynu, aydin* usually occur together with the sentence particle in main clauses. Together they form a particle phrase and they are often contracted into one word.

Notice that the short subject pronoun *la* does not occur together with the sentence particle, but in the predicate phrase, together with the verb.

6.8 Subject pronouns in subclauses

The short subject pronouns usually occur as the first word in subclauses that contain a subject NP. It is as if short subject pronouns that are not immediately preceded by a sentence particle, but occurring on their own, serve as indicators for subclauses.

examples

6.9 Phrase Order

The particle phrase must precede the verb phrase.

Noun phrases may occur anywhere.

These two rules give this scheme for the order of phrases in Somali:

(NPs) **PP** (NPs) **VP** (NPs)

NP = noun phrase, PP = particle phrase, VP = verb phrase

6. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

- 6.1 Give three examples of Somali sentences with different pronouns that are used anaphorically. What is the antecedent?
- 6.2 Give three examples of Somali sentences with different pronouns that are used deictically.
- 6.2 Give one example of a Somali sentence with an anaphoric pronoun that precedes the antecedent.
- 6.3 Can you think of any other noun than *laf* that can be used with possessive determiner suffixes to express emphasis in a similar way as English ‘myself, yourself...’?
- 6.4 Do you agree with the claim that “the long forms *isaga, iyada, iyaga* are mainly used to refer to persons, and only seldom to inanimate objects. Referring to objects, the demonstrative pronouns *kan, tan, kaa(s), taa(s)* are preferred.” Can you think of an example or two where this is contradicted, and the long personal pronouns are used to refer to inanimate objects?
- 6.5 Give two examples of sentences with the reflexive pronoun where it is used to refer to an antecedent in the 1st and the 2nd person, respectively.
- 6.6 Give two examples of sentences with the reflexive pronoun where it is used in its reflexive meaning (not the reciprocal meaning) with an antecedent in the plural.
- 6.7 Give two examples of sentences with a gap indicating a 3rd person object.
- 6.8 Give one example each of clauses with the constituent structure
- NP PP VP NP
 - PP VP NP
 - PP NP VP
 - NP PP VP
 - NP PP NP VP NP
- 6.9 Pick an authentic text and find in it five random complex sentences containing a subclause which contains a subject NP. Look for short subject pronouns in the subclauses. In what position do they occur?

Unit 7 – Verb Phrases and Clitics

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 17. **Clitics**, pages 316-329.

Zholkovskij (1979), Appendix VII. **Preverbal particles**, 309–333.

7. Key Concepts

Verb phrase, main verb, auxiliary verb, clitic, host word

7.1 The verb phrase (VP)

Just like the noun phrase (NP) has specific structures in specific languages, the same is true for verb phrases (VP).

The Somali verb phrase contains a main verb (or head verb), and it may also contain an auxiliary verb (or a helping verb). Another possibility is that it contains an adjective followed by the verb *yahay* (and possibly also an auxiliary verb).

[Faadumo]^{NP} [waxa ay]^{PP} [qortay]^{VP} [qoraalkan gaaban]^{NP}
[Galabta]^{NP} [xaggee]^{NP} [baad]^{PP} [tegi doontaa]^{VP?}
[Dugsigoodu]^{NP} [waa]^{PP} [yar yahay]^{VP}

It is also important to remember that the root morpheme *ah-* is deleted after an adjective.

Before the verb (or adj.+verb) a certain type of small words may occur. The set of words and their order is fixed.

[Waxa ay]^{PP} [ka timid]^{VP} [Jowhar]^{NP}
[Waxa uu]^{PP} [ku fiican yahay]^{VP} [sayniska]^{NP}
[Baabuurtu]^{NP} [waxa ay]^{PP} [u soo kala hormareen]^{VP} [horsanaanta sawirku muujinayo]^{NP}.

Read about the small words that belong to the verb phrase in Zholkovskij's (1979: 309–333) *Somali syntax*. Study the table on page 328 very carefully.

7.3 Clitics

Many small words in a language do not occur independently. They always occur together with another more important word, a so called **host word**, that “carries” the smaller word along with it. This could be said about many of the small words that occur in the Somali verb phrase. Such small words are referred to as **clitics**.

In some sense they behave almost like affixes (i.e. prefixes or suffixes). In the verb phrase they always occur somewhere before the verb, but on the other hand, they can be uttered as independent words, even if they are not really used on their own.

Clitics are said to be **syntactically free** but **phonologically bound**, i.e. pronounced together with their host word, and there is often only one stress (high tone) in the whole group of words. But in other, syntactic ways, clitics behave as independent words.

Also the difference between the long and short personal pronouns could be said to be a difference between independent forms (*aniga, adiga...*) and clitic forms (*aan, aad, uu, ay, la, aannu, aynu, aydin; i, ku, na, ina, idin, is*). The host word of the subject pronouns is usually the sentence particle (e.g. *waa ay*), and the host of the object pronouns as well as the indefinite subject pronoun *la* is a word in the verb phrase (e.g. *i aragtay*).

There are also so called second position clitics in Somali, the conjunctions *-na* and *-se*. They occur after the first word or the first phrase of a clause, and it doesn't matter much what kind of word it is attached to.

Somali also shows **clitic doubling** of personal pronouns. The clitic is used even if there is an NP with the exact same meaning.

Diinku waxa uu leeyahay qolof adag.

Marnaba ma sii ogeyn in Wasiirku uu fursaddaas uga faa'iideysan doono in uu aniga i dacweeyo.

7. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

7.1 What is the definition of an auxiliary verb?

7.2 Somali only has a handful of auxiliary verbs. How many auxiliary verbs are there in Somali? Write one simple sentence to illustrate each auxiliary verb that you can think of.

7.3 Give two example sentences with two auxiliary verbs after each other in the same clause.

7.4 Give two example sentences with a combination of two prepositions. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.5 Give two example sentences with a combination of three prepositions. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.6 Give two example sentences with a combination of a pronoun and two prepositions. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.7 Give two example sentences with a combination of two prepositions and the negation. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.8 Give an example sentence each with the five different **second object pronouns** *kay, kaa, kayo, keen, kiin*. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.9 In the table on page 328, Zholkovskij (1979) gives the words *hoos*, *ag*, *dhex*, *hor*, *kor*, *dul* in column 11. These are originally nouns, but have developed into **verb phrase particles** that occur as the last element right before the verb, i.e. after pronouns, prepositions and other particles. Can you think of any more words in this group? **Prove it** with an example sentence where this word is preceded by one of the other small words that belong to the verb phrase. Mark the position of the high tone(s) in the verb phrase with an accent sign.

7.10 Use the two Somali **second position clitics** in three sentences and show that they may attach to words in different word classes.

Unit 8 – Tense, Aspect and Mood

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 9, pages 147–169.

8. Key Concepts

Tense, morphological tense, form, construction, semantic tense, present, past, future, absolute tense, relative tense;

mood, indicative/realis, irrealis/subjunctive, conditional, imperative;

aspect, progressive, habitual, iterative, completive, continuative.

8.1 Tense

Tense is the grammatical marking of the point in time for an event.

Morphological tense is expressed by inflection, i.e. with affixes. Somali has two morphological tenses: present and past (*arkaa/arkayaa* vs. *arkay/arkayay*).

There can also be **semantic tenses**, expressed through the use of auxiliaries or other **constructions**, i.e. combinations of words. Somali has a third, semantic tense, the future tense, expressed through a construction with the auxiliary *doonaa*.

This is a quite common set of morphological and semantic tenses.

Some languages have different past tenses and even future tenses, depending on how far in the past or in the future the event is located, but Somali only has one past tense and one (semantic, constructional) future tense.

Absolute and relative tense

Tense marks the time of an event in relation to some point of reference. The point of reference might be “now”, i.e. **absolute tense**, or the time of another event, i.e. **relative tense**.

In Somali main clauses, the tenses are generally used in an absolute manner, but in subclauses, tenses (and aspects) are sometimes used in a relative way.

8.2 Aspect

Aspect is the grammatical marking of the development or the distribution of an event over time.

Morphological aspect refers to inflectional forms that express aspect. Somali has the **progressive** aspect that is expressed by the suffix *-ay-*. Morphological aspect also

means that more or less all verbs will have these aspectual forms. Almost all Somali verb can form the progressive aspect.

Another common aspect in various languages is the **habitual** aspect. In Somali the simple present form expresses the habitual aspect, but in the past tense there is a special construction with the auxiliary verb *jiray* that expresses the past habitual aspect.

Some languages also have other aspects, such as the **perfective**, which refers to the event as complete. Other labels for very similar meanings are **resultative** or **completive**. Somali has the particle *soo* that might have become an expression of such completive aspect, besides its original meaning of movement towards a place.

Examples

Another interesting aspect is the **continuative** aspect that occurs in some languages with the meaning that the action keeps going on, the actor goes on doing something, keeps doing it, or does not stop doing it. Somali has the particle *sii* that might be an expression of this continuative aspect, besides its original meaning of movement away from a place.

Examples

There is also an **iterative** or repetitive aspect in many languages, meaning that the action is carried out several times on one occasion. This seems to be what verbs with reduplication express in Somali.

Examples

An action that is carried out several times on different occasions is expressed by the habitual aspect.

Other aspects that occur in several languages are the inceptive aspect (to begin to do something) and the terminative aspect (to stop doing something). Somali does not have grammatical forms or constructions for these aspects, but simply uses verbs like *bilaabaa* followed by a subclause.

Aspect & Tense

Some aspectual distinctions are made in all tenses, whereas other distinctions are only made in some tenses. E.g. the Somali progressive aspect does not exist in the future tense, only in the present and past.

Lexical aspect

Lexical aspect refers to the fact that certain verbs, already in their basic meaning, express some kind of aspect. Some verbs refer to **events** (i.e. situations where something happens, some activity is carried out), whereas other verbs refer to **states**.

It is a general tendency in English that only verbs that express an event or action can be used in the progressive aspect, whereas verbs that denote a state usually don't occur in the progressive aspect.

Jim has a headache. *Jim is having a headache.
Sue loves dogs. *Sue is loving dogs.

Telic vs. atelic verbs

Event verbs may be further divided into telic and atelic verbs. **Telic** verbs have an endpoint (*break, find*), the action becomes completed, whereas **atelic** verbs don't have an endpoint (*sing, read*), you can go on doing it for as long as you wish.

8.3 Mood and Modality

Mood and Modality are closely related, and the exact definitions vary between linguists.

Mood and Modality is the grammatical marking of the speaker's relation to the event and the event's relation to reality, as well as the function of a clause in communication.

An important division is between real actions (realis or indicative) and imagined, non-real actions (irrealis, subjunctive, conditional etc.)

The three main Somali **moods**, which are expressed morphologically, are

- the indicative or realis mood: *akhriyaa, akhrinayaa, akhriyay, akhrinayay*
- the subjunctive or irrealis mood: *akhriyo, akhrinayo, akhrin, akhrinayn*
- the imperative mood: *akhri!, akhriya!*

Semantically, there are many more, but they are expressed by auxiliaries, particles or other constructions, most importantly

- the conditional: *akhri lahaa*
- the optative: *aan akhriyo, ha akhriso*
- the prohibitive: *ha akhrin*
- the interrogative: *ma akhrisaa?*
- the negative: *ma akhriso*

Modality usually refers to the use of certain auxiliaries or constructions, e.g.

- possibility/ability: *akhri karaa*
- inability: *akhri waayay*

- obligation: *waa in aan akhriyo*
- mirative (surprise and admiration): *Cuntaduna macaanaa*.

8. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

- 8.1 List all the **morphological** tense, aspect and mood forms (i.e. expressed by one single word) in the 3rd persons singular of the Somali verb *keen*. Give just the form of the verb and the linguistic terms telling the tense, aspect and mood of the form.
- 8.2 List all the **constructions expressing other semantic** tenses, aspects and moods (i.e. expressed by more than one word) in the 3rd persons singular of the Somali verb *keen*. Give just the constructions and the linguistic terms telling the tense, aspect and mood that they express.
- 8.3 Are there any Somali verbs that cannot be used in the progressive aspect? If yes, then try to think of three or four such verbs. Use them in sentences that would require the progressive form of other verbs, but where you can use the simple form of these exceptional verbs.
- 8.4 Some tenses and aspects cannot be used in certain types of clauses or constructions. What tenses and aspects can be used in clauses beginning with *Waa in ay...* What tenses and aspects cannot be used in this type of clause. Give examples of both grammatical and ungrammatical full clauses of this type, and state what verb forms are possible and what forms are not possible.
- 8.5 Do the same for subclauses following the main clause *Waxaan rabaa in...*
- 8.6 Do the same for subclauses following the subordinator *si...u*
- 8.7 Explain the meaning of **soo** in the following examples. Could any of these examples involve a **completive** (resultative, perfective) aspect? Is it possible to take away *soo* in these sentences? How does the meaning change if *soo* is taken away?

Soo gala!

Bal eega, wuu soo socdaa, Isagoo buuraha korkooda ku soo boodboodaya...

Wiilka iyo hooyadii markii ay kala bogteen, ayaa waxaa dhankooda u soo dhaqaaqay dumarkii reer xaafadda ahaa ee nala taagnaa aniga iyo Maryan.

Waxa aan horay u soo sheegnay ilaha ugu waaweyn ee dhaqaalaha...

Warqaddii markuu dhakhtarku soo qoray oo uu ninkii u dhiibayo ayuu askarigu fashilay sirtii.

Sidaas oo kalena jaraa'idka, waxa lagu daabacay xuruufta ay fartu ka kooban tahay; casharro isdabajoog ahna waa lagu soo qori jiray.

Hooyo waxay noo sheegtay kolkuu soo cabo waa sidaa... Kolkuu naagtiisa kale la soo dagaalo aniguu cadhada iila yimaadaa...

Sow maahayn in aan u sii gudbo tan xigta iyo tan sii xigta ilaa aan gaaray meel aan guriga dib uga soo aqoon waayo.

Wuxuu u soo noqday saaxibkiis, wuxuuna ku yiri: «Waxaan soo arkay meel barwaaqo leh, laakiin waa khatar, maxaa yeelay bahallo ayaa jooga». Wuxuu kula taliyay dameerkii inuu tartiib u soo cuno cawska una soo cabbo biyaha.

Waxay soo gaartey goobtii baska lagu sugaayey.

Axmed waxa uu u shaqeeyaa warshada Volvo, warshaddu wax ay soo saartaa gawaarida yaryar iyo kuwa waawaynba.

Qorsho oo aan hadalkii carabkeeda ka sii dhammaan ayaa albaabka la soo garaacay.

8.8 Explain the meaning of *sii* in the following examples. Could any of these examples involve a **continuative** aspect? Is it possible to take away *sii* in these sentences? How does the meaning change if *sii* is taken away?

Xayawaankee baa dhex ku sii hurday?

Xayawaankee baa sii watay orodkiisii?

Waa in uu sii kordhaa ka-qayb-galkooda xagga siyaasadda.

Haddii tabakaayadii aad ii dirtay ee gurigeena ka horraysay xirnayd, muxuu ahaa ikhtiyaarka kale ee ii bannaanaa? Sow maahayn in aan u sii gudbo tan xigta iyo tan sii xigta ilaa aan gaaray meel aan guriga dib uga soo aqoon waayo.

Wuu sii hadlay:...

"Abaayo, musqusha ayaan gelayaaye i sii sug."

"Naa bal ha soo daahin, meel iga yaabisay baad i keentee," Saxarla ayaa ka sii daba tidhi Muxubo oo xaggii musqusha u sii socota.

Intii ay dhexda ku sii jireen, Saxarla hadal badan ma odhan...

"Abaayo, adigu guriga sii ilaali, waadigii xalayna xanuunsaday ee seexan kari waayeye"

Markii aan bilaabay akhriska oo aan arkay culayska kelmadaha waaweyn ee uu qoraagu isticmaalay, aad ayaan uga werweray sii akhrinta, laakiin markii aan sii akhriyoba buugga Saxarla waxa uu noqday mid aad ii xiiso geliya. (Saxarla)

haddii xanuunku sii jiro...

Bakeerigaas markii uu laacay ayuu ku ciiray sariirtiisa oo afadiisu durba ka sii khuurineysey.

8.9 Give examples of five Somali verbs with an **iterative** meaning. Use them in full sentences.

8.10 Some verbs seem to exhibit a variation in the use of the progressive forms, some use them, and some don't, e.g. *socdaa/soconayaa* 'is walking', *karaa/karayaa* 'can'. Would you use them? What might be the explanation to this variation?

8.11 Sometimes the two aspects are used in subclauses to express different time relations between the main clause and the subclause. How would you explain the difference in meaning between these sentences? (One of the sentences was found in a story under a picture showing some children eating some sweets.)

*Marka ay masaajidka ka soo **noqdaan** waxa ay cunayaan buskud iyo nacnac.*

*Marka ay masaajidka ka soo **noqonayaan** waxa ay cunayaan buskud iyo nacnac.*

8.12 Can you think of two or three sentences where the main clause is in the past tense and the subclause is in the (subjunctive) **present tense**, used in a **relative** manner, so that it is also referring to the same past tense as the verb in the main clause? How would you for example translate the following sentences?

*Han ville att hon **skulle hjälpa** honom med läxan.*

*Jag pratade med henne i förra veckan och då sa hon att han **var** sjuk.*

Unit 9 – Non-verbal semantic predicates

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 10, pages 173–190.

9. Key Concepts

Semantic predicate, predicate complement, subject predicate complement, object predicate complement, predicate adjunct, equative clause, attributive clause, locative clause, possessive clause, existential clause, impersonal clause, indefinite agent clause

9.1 The semantic predicate

Sometimes languages have clauses without any verb, e.g.

[Sahro] [waa] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + particle phrase + NP

In clauses like this, the second noun phrase is considered to be the predicate, since there is no verb to take that role. Somali only has this single type of verbless clauses. Many other languages have many more types of such verbless clauses.

If the same type of clause is expressed in the past, the **copula verb (likning verb) *yahay*** has to be used in Somali.

[Sahro] [waxa ay] [ahayd] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + PaP + VP + NP

It is a common pattern in many languages that the copula is not used in the present tense, but it is necessary in other tenses in order to express the tense in question.

The NP still constitutes the **semantic predicate**, since the verb *yahay* has practically no meaning, but the NP is not the **grammatical predicate** in this type of clause. The grammatical predicate is the copula verb *yahay*. The NP is instead a **predicate complement**, which behaves like other arguments and adjuncts (objects or adverbials) of action verbs, since the predicate complement can move and also be focused by *waxa*, *ayaa* or *baa*.

In many languages, there is a number of common clause types that don't express actions and therefore often behave differently from clauses with action verbs. Such clauses often describe qualities of the subject of the clause, its function, its position or its possessor/possession. In such sentences the quality, function, position, possession or possessor is the **semantic predicate** of the clause. Languages however express such clauses in various ways.

9.1.1 Equative clauses

In equative clauses, the semantic predicate is a noun or a noun phrase. Equative clauses express that the subject is identic with the predicate complement or that the subject can be described through the predicate complement.

[Sahro] [waa] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + particle phrase + NP
Jaamac waa [wasiirka difaaca].
Jaamac waa [arday].

The same Somali clauses may also be expressed with the special particle *weeye* that has probably emerged through contraction of *waa+yahay*.

[Sahro] [weeye] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + particle phrase + NP

This structure may also occur with the final focus particle *waxa*.

[Tallabada labaad] [waxa weeye] [dhalashada]

The word *waxa/waxaa* may also occur as the subject.

[Waxaa]na [weeye] [webi Jubba].

If the same type of clause is expressed in the past, the **copula verb (likning verb)** *yahay* has to be used.

[Sahro] [waxa ay] [ahayd] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + PaP + VP + NP
[Sahro] [aradayad wanaagsan] [ayaa ay] [ahayd]. NP + NP + PaP + VP

It is a common pattern in many languages that the copula is not used in the present tense, but it is necessary in other tenses in order to express the tense in question.

However, also in the present tense, the same structure with the copula verb *yahay* is also possible when the semantic predicate is focused.

[Sahro] [waxa ay] [tahay] [aradayad wanaagsan]. NP + PaP + VP + NP
[Sahro] [aradayad wanaagsan] [ayaa ay] [tahay]. NP + NP + PaP + VP

When the noun in the predicate complement is indefinite, equative clauses often becomes semantically quite similar to attributive clauses.

Dibaddu waa [qabow].

9.1.2 Attributive clauses

In attributive clauses, the semantic predicate is an adjective. It describes the subject of the clause. If an adjective is the semantic predicate, the copula verb *yahay* has to be

used. The adjective and the verb together constitute the grammatical predicate. The adjective always immediately precedes the copula verb as part of the verb phrase.

[Aradayaddu] [waa ay] [wanaagsan tahay]. NP + PaP + VP
[Aradayaddu] [waa] [wanaagsan tahay].
Jaamac waa uu [dheer yahay].
Jaamac waa [dheer yahay].

This type of clause behaves practically as any ordinary Somali clause with an intransitive action verb (e.g. *Jaamac waa uu ordayaa*), with the only difference that there is more of a tendency to omit the short subject pronoun in clauses with adjective predicates than in other clauses with real verb predicates.

9.1.3 Other verbs in equative and attributive clauses

Subject vs. object predicate complement

A **subject predicate complement** tells something about the subject of the clause.

*Mary **became** very sick.*
*Mary **became** a world-famous poet.*
*John **seems** very angry.*

Such verbs in Somali are *noqdaa...*

An **object predicate complement** tells something about the object of the clause.

*I **consider** John honest.*
*I **consider** John my friend.*
*They all **consider** me crazy.*
*We **elected** John chairman of the board.*

9.1.4 Locative clauses

Locative clauses indicate the position of the subject of the clause.

The semantic predicate is an noun expressing a place/position.

On doma. (Russian)
isaga guri.ku.dhex
'Guriga buu joogaa.'

On byl doma. (Russian)
isaga ahaa guri.ku.dhex
'Guriga buu joogay.'

Somali uses *joogaa* (mainly about people) or *jiraa* (mainly about objects) in many/most locative clauses.

9.1.5 Possessive clauses

In many languages, clauses that express possession are very similar to locative clauses.

U menya novaya mashina. (Russian)
agta aniga cusub baabuur
'Waxaan leeyahay baabuur cusub.'

Somali uses a predicate verb in possessive clauses, but makes difference between different verbs: *leeyahay, leedahay; hayaa, haysaa; haystaa, haysataa.*

9.1.6 Existential clauses

Many languages has special verbs or constructions that express the existence of a person or object. Swedish uses *finns*, English *there is/are*, and Somali has *jiraa*.

9.2 Predicate adjuncts

A predicate complement is an obligatory part of the clause, a depictive predicate adjunct is not.

*Henry arrived to the trial **drunk**.* / *Henry arrived to the trial.*
*Susan served the vegetables **raw**.* / *Susan served the vegetables.*

Predicate adjuncts can often be moved, but predicate complements cannot.

*Mary ran from the room, **ashamed of herself**.*
*Mary, **ashamed of herself**, ran from the room.*
*Woolsey, **as a loyal officer**, refused to join the rebellion.*
***As a loyal officer**, Woolsey refused to join the rebellion.*

It is also possible to have two predicate adjuncts in the same clause, but not two predicate complements.

In Somali, predicate adjuncts are expressed by the conjunction *oo* followed by an adjective or a relative clause.

Examples

9.3 Impersonal clauses

Clauses where no semantic agent really exists.

*It rains. It snows. Det regnar. Det blåser.
Saltet löses upp i vattnet. Lektionen börjar kl. åtta.*

With meteorological verbs, some other noun is the grammatical subject.

Roobku wuu da'ayaa.

Somali anticausative verbs (with the suffix *-m-/–an–*) often express effects of natural forces.

Cusbadu way ku milantaa biyaha. Here, *cusbadu* is the semantic theme.
Casharku waxa uu bilaabmaa siddeedda subaxnimo.

9.4 Indefinite agent clauses

Somali *la*, no referent in irreal clauses, unknow agent/referent in realis clauses.

9. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

9.1. Can you think of equative clauses where *waa*, *weeye* and *waxa weeye* are not freely interchangeable? If possible, give example sentence with all three variants, and mark the ungrammatical sentences with a star in front of the sentence. (If some of you consider a sentence grammatical and others consider it ungrammatical, you should mark it with a question mark in front of the sentence.)

9.2 Can you say something about the difference in meaning between the three types of constructions, with *waa*, *weeye* or *waxa weeye*?

9.3 There is also a form *weeyaan*. How is that form used? Give three examples and try to explain how this form is used.

9.4 Can equative clauses in the past tense be expressed without focus (*waxa*, *baa*, *ayaa*), with the basic sentence particle *waa*, parallel to the present tense *Sahra waa ardayad wanaagsan*?

9.5 Translate these examples, that in English contain a subject predicate complement. Do the translations contain a subject predicate complement in Somali?

*Mary became very sick.
Mary became a world-famous poet.
John seems very angry.*

9.6 Can you think of any other Somali verbs that require a **subject** predicate complement. If so, give max. three example sentences with different verbs.

9.7 Translate the examples, that in English contain an object predicate complement. Do the translations contain an object predicate complement in Somali?

I consider John honest.

I consider John my friend.

They all consider me crazy.

We elected John chairman of the board.

9.8 Can you think of any other Somali verbs that require an **object** predicate complement. If so, give max. three example sentences with different verbs.

9.9 Give examples of three (or more) different types Somali **locative** clauses, if possible with different verbs. What is the difference between the verbs? Can they be freely interchanged, or are there any restrictions or differences in their meaning?

9.10 Give examples of three (or more) different types Somali **possessive** clauses, if possible with different verbs. What is the difference between the verbs? Can they be freely interchanged, or are there any restrictions or differences in their meaning?

9.11 Give examples of three (or more) different types Somali **existential** clauses, if possible with different verbs. What is the difference between the verbs? Can they be freely interchanged, or are there any restrictions or differences in their meaning?

9.12 Translate into Somali.

*Henry arrived to the trial **drunk**.*

*Susan served the vegetables **raw**.*

*Mary ran from the room, **ashamed of herself**.*

*As a **loyal officer**, Woolsey refused to join the rebellion.*

9.13 Give three quite different examples of impersonal Somali clauses.

9.14 Give two different examples of indefinite agent clauses, one irrealis clause, and one realis clause, i.e. one clause where the subject doesn't have any specific referent, and one where there is a specific referent that is not revealed.

Unit 10 – Sentence types, Negation & Word order

Read:

Kroeger (2005), Chapter 11, Special sentence types, pages 196–214.

Saeed (1993), Somali Reference Grammar, pp. 218-220 & 236-244.

10. Key Concepts

Speech acts: statement, command, question.

Sentence types: declarative, imperative, interrogative.

Question types: yes-no question, content question, alternative question, tag question.

Basic word order.

Negation.

10.1 Sentence types

Sentences have a form (syntactic structure or pattern) and a purpose. The purpose is referred to as a SPEECH ACT.

SPEECH ACT	SENTENCE TYPE PATTERN (MOOD)
statement	declarative sentence
command	imperative sentence
question	interrogative sentence

When speech acts are expressed through the corresponding sentence patterns, the speech acts are referred to as DIRECT SPEECH ACTS.

Sometimes a speech act is expressed through another sentence pattern than the expected one. Such speech acts are referred to as INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS.

An interrogative sentence pattern can be used as a command speech act.

Why don't you just be quite?

10.2 Basic word order

In many languages, word order is used to give special prominence a certain part of a sentence, to mark focus (new information) or topic (what the sentence is about, the point of departure). The basic word order does not mark any such prominence, whereas all other possible word orders will mark some kind of prominence.

The basic word order is typically (Bickford 1998):

- the most frequent word order,
- used in positive statements with no focus,
- used in sentences with NP's as the subject and the object,
- used in subordinate clauses,
- used in most types of sentences and contexts.

10.3 Commands

Command speech acts are usually expressed through imperative clauses.

Typically, an imperative clause

- contains no word expressing the subject (you),
- the imperative verb form has no ending, it equals the stem of the verb,
- the imperative mood forms do not distinguish between different tenses,
- the imperative verb forms only have inflection for number.

Some languages have imperative forms also for the 1st and 3rd person. Other languages have other constructions instead, such as the optative (*May he win!*) or hortative (*Let's eat!*).

Most languages have various strategies in order to soften a command or make it more polite. (*Please call me tomorrow. Could you pass me the salt, please? Could I borrow your pen? It's quite cold in here!*)

10.4 Questions

Questions are typically expressed as interrogative sentences. There are three different types.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| – Yes-No questions | Would you like some coffee? |
| – Content questions | What would you like to drink? |
| – Alternative questions | Would you like some coffee or some tea? |
| – Tag questions | You would like some coffee, wouldn't you? |

10.4.1 Yes-No questions

Also called **polar questions** or **closed questions**.

Typologically, yes-no questions are typically expressed through intonation, a question particle, a verb affix, changes in word order, or a combination of these.

If a question particle is used, its position is usually sentence initial, sentence final, or after the first word or phrase of the sentence. It may also attach to a specific part of the sentence. It may also help express the focus of the sentence.

10.4.2 Content questions

Also called **wh-questions**, or **open questions**.

These questions contain a question word. Typologically, the question word occurs at the beginning of the question (referred to as **question word fronting**) or in the same position as the words that constitute the answer would occur in a statement with basic word order (referred to as **question word *in situ***).

10.4.3 Alternative questions

Alternative questions offer two or more alternatives to choose between.

Do you want some coffee or not?

Do you want some coffee or some tea or just water?

Does it rain or snow?

10.4.4 Tag questions

Tag questions seek confirmation

You speak Swahili, don't you?

10.5 Negation

Some languages have only one strategy for marking negative sentences, such as English *not*. Other languages may have different strategies in different types of sentences.

Not all negative words turn a sentence into a negative sentence.

negative clause: *This work is **not** finished.*

positive clause: *This work is **un**finished.*

negative clause: *Jag lyckades **inte** med uppgiften.*

positive clause: *Jag **miss**lyckades med uppgiften.*

10. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

10.1. How many types of indirect speech acts can you think of in Somali? Give one or two examples of each type of mismatch between sentence type pattern and intended speech act.

10.2. What is the basic word order in Somali. Give examples that correspond to the criteria listed by Bickford.

10.3. How typical are Somali imperative clauses in a typological perspective? Do Somali imperatives behave like in most other languages or not? Illustrate with examples!

10.4. Does Somali have something like an imperative in the 1st and 3rd person? Give examples.

10.5. How can you make command more polite or soft in Somali. Give examples of various strategies.

10.6. How are typical yes-no questions expressed in Somali? Give a few different examples and try to describe the sentence pattern in syntactic terms (intonation, question particle, verb affix, word order). What can you say about the use of focus particles?

10.7. How are typical content questions expressed in Somali? Give a few different examples and try to describe the sentence pattern in syntactic terms. In what position do question words occur? What can you say about the use of focus particles?

10.8. How are typical alternative questions expressed in Somali? Give a few different examples and try to describe the sentence pattern in syntactic terms. What can you say about the use of focus particles?

10.9. Does Somali have tag questions? If so, how are typical tag questions expressed in Somali? Give a few different examples and try to describe the sentence pattern in syntactic terms.

10.10. Does Somali have one or several strategies for turning sentences into negative ones. Give examples of declarative, interrogative, imperative clauses and how they can be turned into negative clauses.

10.11. Give examples of positive clauses that contain different kinds of negative words that do not make the sentence type pattern negative.

Unit 11 – Coordination & Subordination

Unit 11 <-- --> 12

Read:

Kroeger. 2005. Chapter 12–12.3.2, pages 218–227.

Gebert, Lucyna. 1992. System of coordination in Somali. In Adam & Gesheker (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Somali Studies*, 428–441. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press.

11. Key Concepts

Coordination, subordination.

Main clause or matrix clause.

Subordinate clause (subclause) or dependent clause or embedded clause.

Subclauses that function like NP's (noun-like subclauses),

Subclauses that function like modifiers to NP's (adjective-like subclauses).

11.1 Relations between clauses

There are three different ways that clauses can be put together in order to create a text.

1. Independent clauses follow each other as separate sentences.

one clause = one sentence

Gidaarrada gurigan waxa lagu dhisay dhagax iyo shamiinto. Saqafka waxa laga sameeyey terniig. Albaabka waxa laga sameeyay loox. Daaqadaha waxa ku jira muraayado. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Fasalka 1aad, Nayroobi 2001)

2. Independent clauses are connected to each other by a conjunction. They are still two main clauses with equal status, but there is a relation between them that is expressed by the conjunction. This strategy is referred to as COORDINATION.

two main clauses = one sentence

Ibraahim waxa uu qabtaa dadka xun waxa uuna hor geeyaa maxkamad. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Fasalka 3aad, Nayroobi 2001)

3. One clause occurs inside another clause. We then talk about a main or matrix clause and a subordinate or embedded clause. This strategy is referred to as SUBORDINATION.

a main clause + a subclause = one sentence

Ragga dab-demisku waxa ay isticmaalaan biyo [ay dabka ku demiyaan]. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Fasalka 3aad, Nayroobi 2001)

The main difference between a main clause and a subordinate clause is that a main clause contains a sentence particle, while subclauses don't. The only exception are imperative main clauses which don't contain any sentence particle.

11.2 Coordination

The ADDITIVE conjunctions *oo* and *-na* join two clauses. *oo* may also join incomplete clauses (verb phrases).

Alternatives or options are joined by the so-called DISJUNCTIVE conjunction *ama*. The variant *mise* is used in questions.

An contrast or contradiction is expressed by the ADVERSATIVE conjunctions *laakiin* and *-se*, or by the phrases *hase yeeshee*, *hase ahaatee*. After a negated or prohibitive clause, *ee* or *balse* are used.

Waxa aad u shaqeyn doontaan koox-koox, hase yeeshee waxa looga baahan yahay arday waliba in uu diyaarsado khariidaddiisa, maxaa yeelay waxa laga yaabaa in aad ugu baahataan qorshe safar. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Nayroobi 2001)

Ha ooyin ee bal ii sheeg waxa dhacay!

Reason is expressed by the EXPLANATIVE conjunction *waayo*, or the phrases *maxaa yeelay* or *sababta oo ah*.

Ha tegin hadda, waayo waa madow!

Xirisi ma ciyaari karo kubbad sababtoo ah lug ayaa si xun uga jabtay.

The CONCLUSIVE conjunction *ee* expresses a purpose after an imperative clause. It often follows after the second clause, contracted with the final word.

Kaalaya, aan ku dheelnee!

11.3 Subordination

There are two basic types of embedded or subordinate clauses.

1. Clauses that **function like a noun**. These subclauses can often be replaced by a simple noun. These subclauses function as a complement or adjunct to the verb of the main clause. These clauses are called NOMINAL SUBCLAUSES. They are introduced by a **complementizer word**, which is most often the subordinating conjunction (subjunction) *in*.

Dadkani ma rabaan [in ay kaneecadu ku taranto cawaska dhaadheer]. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Fasalka 3aad, Nayroobi 2001)

Dadkani ma rabaan dagaal.

2. Clauses that **function like an adjective**. These subclauses can often be replaced by a simple adjective. They are added as a modifier phrase to a noun in the main clause. These clauses are called RELATIVE SUBCLAUSES (or ATTRIBUTIVE SUBCLAUSES).

Ragga dab-demisku waxa ay isticmaalaan biyo [ay dabka ku demiyaan]. (Cilmiga Bulshada, Fasalka 3aad, Nayroobi 2001)

Ragga dab-demisku waxa ay isticmaalaan biyo badan.

11.4 Nominal subclauses

Nominal subclauses have a direct relation to the predicate verb in the main clause. The subclause functions as the object, the subject or an adjunct (adverbial) phrase with respect to the main clause verb.

Most Somali nominal subclauses are introduced by the conjunction *in*.

Subject subclause

*Ma fiicna [in carruurta laga nixiyo].
[Maanta in aynu kubbadda cagta ciyaarno] aad bay u fiican tahay.*

Object subclause

Hubso [in ay darsiga garteen] iyo in kale!

A direct quotation (direct speech) as the object NP of the main clause verb.

Sahra waxa ay tiri ["Anigu ma rabo."]

An indirect quotation (indirect speech) as the object subclause of the main clause verb.

Sahra waxa ay tiri [in aanay rabin.]

Adverbial (adjunct) subclauses, expressing circumstance such as time, manner etc.

Waxa la isku raacay in lagu kulmo beerta weyn [mar uusan mr Jones meesha joogin].

11.5 Characteristics of subclauses

Subordinate clauses can be characterised in a number of important ways that differ more or less categorically from main clauses. There are of course differences between languages, but there are also notable similarities. Typical for Somali subclauses is that:

- there is never any sentence particle in a subordinate clause,
- the subclause negation is always *aan*, never *ma*, whereas both occur in main clauses.

- the most common word order in subclauses is SOV.
- the subject pronoun is commonly used immediately after the complementizer (or subordinator word), but it may also occur in other positions. It is optional if the subject is also expressed by a noun.
- the predicate verb in a subordinate clause is almost never in the full present or future indicative form. It can however be in most other indicative, subjunctive or conditional forms, depending on the type of subclause. In some types of subclauses it is not possible to use the progressive forms.

11.6 Classes of verbs and their preferred complement clauses

There are certain semantic classes of verbs that regularly take object or subject complement clauses:

- **saying and knowing:** *yiraahdaa, gartaa, og yahay, ...* (know, think, say, report, suspect, fear, hope, imply, tell...)
- **manipulation:** (force, persuade, cause, request, urge, command, order...)
- **modality:** *rabaa, doonayaa* (want, intend, plan, try, prefer, threaten, be willing, be afraid, be eager, be able, know how...)
- **aspect:** (begin, finish, keep on, go around...)
- **demands:** *waa muhiim in...* (insist, demand, be essential (that), be important (that)...))

11.7 Direct and indirect quotations

Direct quotations (direct speech) are not subordinate clauses, they are just a word by word citation that is embedded as the object or subject NP in a matrix clause. Direct quotations are fully fledged main clauses with all the typical elements of main clauses, such as a sentence particle and the use of the negation *ma*.

When direct quotations are turned into **indirect** quotations, all deictic words need to be adjusted, e.g. pronouns and words expressing place and time.

Embedded and subordinated statement

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Statement: | Sahro: <i>Waxa aan...</i> |
| Direct quotation: | Axmed: <i>Waxa ay tiri "Waxa aan..."</i> |
| Indirect quotation: | Axmed: <i>Waxa ay tiri in...</i> |

Embedded and subordinated yes-no question

Yes-no question: *Ma...?*
Direct quotation: *weydiisay "Ma...?"*
Indirect quotation: *weydiisay in..., haddii...*

Embedded and subordinated content question

Content question: *Qofkee...?, Maxaa...?, Sidee...?*
Direct quotation: *weydiisay "Qofkee...?, Maxaa...?, Sidee...?"*
Indirect quotation: *weydiisay qofka..., waxa..., sida...*

Embedded and subordinated command

Command: *Xir indhahaaga!*
Direct quotation: *Waxay u sheegtay "Xir indhihiisa!"*
Indirect quotation: *Waxay u sheegtay in uu xiro indhihiisa.*

11.8 Adjunct or adverbial clauses

Most Somali adjunct or adverbial clauses are introduced by a noun that has become more or less grammaticalised in the role of a complementizer. There are also a few Arabic subordinating conjunctions (subjunctions) that are used in this function: *ilaa*, *maadaama*.

Common adjunct clauses express:

– time

Diinkii waxa uu iska sii watay socodkiisii gaabnaa ilaa [uu gaaro meeshii dhammaadka].

– place

– manner

– reason

– goal or purpose

– condition

– comparison

11. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

11.1 Make a list of all the Somali coordinating conjunctions that you can think of. Give at least one good example sentence for each conjunction. Try not to make the sentences too long.

11.2 Write a short Somali sentence with a **subject complement clause** and another with an **object complement clause**. Write a second version of each clause where you replace the subordinate clause with a single noun.

11.3 Write a short Somali sentence with a **relative clause**. Write a second version of the clause where you replace the subordinate clause with a single adjective.

11.4 Have another pair of short Somali sentence with a **subject complement clause** and another with an **object complement clause**. Can you move the subclause to another position in the sentence, maybe from the beginning to the end, or vice versa?

11.5 Write a short statement, a yes-no question, a content question, and a command. Embed them as direct quotations in a matrix clause.

11.6 Then change them into indirect quotations that become object subclauses of the matrix clause verb.

11.7 Pick a page of text. Find all the subclauses that begin with *in*. Find the last word of each subclause and write it down. Then sort the words according to word class. Work until you have at least 20 words. How many verbs do you have? How many nouns? How many other words?

11.8 Go through the same subclauses again and look at the subject pronoun. How many have a short subject pronoun immediately after *in*? How many have *in* in another position? How many have no short subject pronoun?

11.9 Pick two sentence with an object complement subclause. Use very different verbs in the matrix clause. Don't choose synonymous verbs! Try to change the tense/mode/aspect of the verbs in both the main and the subordinate clause. You are not allowed to change any other words (except if they express time). Also the word order must remain constant. How many different sentences with different verb forms can you produce?

11.10 Produce a short sentence with an object subclause that contains both a pronoun and a noun as the subject of the subclause. Can you move the subject pronoun? Can you delete it? How many different possibilities can you think of?

11.11 In section 11.6, five different semantic groups of verbs are mentioned. Build one Somali sentence with an object subclause for each of these five groups. Can you use the past tense in any of five subclauses? Can you use the progressive aspect in any of the five subclauses?

11.12 Build ten clauses with a adjunct / adverbial subclause. Use ten different subordinator words and try to cover as many different semantic types of adverbial subclauses as possible. Underline the subordinator word.

Unit 12 – Relative clauses

Read:

Kroeger (2005), Chapter 12.4–12.6, pages 227–241.

Antinucci, F. & A. Puglielli. 1980. The syntax of indicator particles in Somali: relative clause construction. *Afroasiatic Linguistics* 7(3), 85–102.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2307/856>

Frascarelli, M. & A. Puglielli. 2005. A comparative analysis of restrictive and appositive relative clauses in Cushitic languages. In Brugè, Giusti, Munaro, Schweikert & Turano (eds.), *Contributions to the 30th Incontro di Grammatica Generativa (Venice, February 26–28, 2004)*, 307–332. Venezia: Cafoscarina.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2307/2595>

Gebert, Lucyna. 1984. Absolute constructions in Somali.

12. Key Concepts

restrictive versus **descriptive** relative clauses

12.1 Relative clauses

A relative clause is a subclause that is part of a noun phrase and modifies the head of that noun phrase.

[Waa]_{PaP} [maxay]_{NP} [shaqada [ay Aamina samaynaysaa]_{REL.CL}]_{NP?}

Just like any other modifier in Somali, the relative clause follows **after** its head noun.

Many languages have one or more **relativisers** (relative words) or relative pronouns that introduce relative clauses. English has *that, which, who, whose...* Swedish has *som, vilken, vars...* Somali does not have a word of this kind. In Somali, relative clauses are added directly to the head noun.

Instead, one of the most important differences between Somali main and subclauses are that main clauses contain a **sentence particle**, whereas subclauses don't.

Another typical trait of Somali relative clauses is that they most often begin with the **short subject pronoun**, cf. *ay* in the example above.

12.2 Relativisation strategies

The head noun of a relative clause has a grammatical relation both to the matrix clause and to the relative clauses. These are often differentiated as an **external** grammatical relation to the matrix clause, and an **internal** grammatical relation to the relative clauses. The internal grammatical relation to the relative clause is also often referred to as the relativised function of the head noun within the relative clause.

The only way to identify the grammatical function of the head noun in Somali relative clauses is usually to identify the missing argument in the relative clause. The missing argument is usually referred to as the gap in the relative clause. The head noun of the relative clause is semantically interpreted as filling this gap.

Another typical trait of relative clauses is that the **head noun** of the subclause plays **two different roles** at the same time. Semantically, it is part of both the main clause and the relative subclause.

[Waa]_{PaP} [maxay]_{NP} [shaqada [ay Aamina samaynaysaa]_{REL.CL}]_{NP}?

Shaqada, in this example, is the subject of the main clause. Compare with

[Waa]_{PaP} [maxay]_{NP} [shaqadu]_{NP}?

[Waa]_{PaP} [maxay]_{NP} [shaqada Aamina]_{NP}?

At the same time *shaqada* is interpreted as the object of the relative subclause.

Shaqada bay Aamina samaynaysaa.

Shaqadee bay Aamina samaynaysaa?

The only reason that it is interpreted as the object of the relative clause [*ay Aamina samaynaysaa*] is that there is no other word within this relative clause that could be the object of the verb *samaynaysaa*. Since the object is “missing”, this **gap** is filled by the head noun of the relative clause.

A head noun may semantically also function as an adverbial in the subclause, often then the object of a preposition. In that case, the preposition will stand on its own in the subclause and refer back to the head noun that is actually located outside the subclause.

Hoosta ka xariiq erayada [uu  **ku** jiro xarafka x]!

Another strategy that is less common in Somali only occurs when the relativised function of the head noun is to be a modifier of a noun in the relative clause. This is always expressed through the presence of a possessive suffix after the noun that is modified by the preceding head noun. This way of marking the relativised function of

the head noun is often referred to as PRONOMINAL COPY, PRONOUN RESUMPTION or PRONOUN RETENTION.

If the head noun's function in the relative clause is as a modifier of another noun, this is expressed through the possessive endings in the 3rd person: *-kiisa/-tiisa, -keeda/-teeda, -kooda/-tooda*. The corresponding relative word used in English and Swedish would be *whose* and *vars*, respectively.

Waa maxay dhererka dhinaca labajibbaarane [wareeggiisu yahay 44 sm]?

12.2 Restrictive relative clauses

There are two basic types of relative clauses: restrictive and descriptive.

The function of a **restrictive**¹ relative clause is to identify, as uniquely as possible, the person or object that the head noun refers to, in a context where the head noun itself would not be enough to do so.

In Somali restrictive relative clauses that follow directly after the head noun are not marked in any particular way.

Examples

If a restrictive relative clause follows after a **definite head noun** that is already followed by some **other modifier**, then such a restrictive relative clause is preceded by the conjunction *ee*.

Geedka moosku waxa uu ka baxaa dalalka cimilada kulul ee [biyaha badan leh].

Magacow cuntada kala duwan ee [sawirka ka muuqata].

Maxaa uu ahaa dharka cusub ee [Xasan loo iibiyay]?

This is also true in adverbial relative clauses following a subordinator word that is a noun, such as *markii*.

Markii [uu kubbaddii gaarey] ee [uu gacanta ku dhigay] ayaa baabuur aad u ordaya meel dhow kaga soo baxay.

¹ **Restrictive** relative clauses are sometimes also called **integrated** (e.g. Huddleston, Pullum & Reynolds 2022) relative clauses.

12.3 Descriptive relative clauses

A **descriptive**² relative clause refers to a head noun that is already uniquely identifiable, also without the relative clause. The relative clause simply gives additional, less crucial information about the head noun.

Descriptive relative clauses are practically always preceded by the conjunction *oo*.

Faadumo waxa ay qortay qoraalkan gaaban oo [ku saabsan saaxiibaddeeda cusub].

Relative clauses that have an **indefinite** common noun as their head word are generally supposed to always be descriptive.

Dabadeed wiil kale oo [Cali la yiraahdo] ayaa hadlay oo yiri...

Ma jiraa dad da' weyn oo [ku nool deriskiinna]?

Maalin ayaa ardayad cusubi oo [ka timid xaafad kale] ku soo biirtay dugsigu.

Guuleed waxa uu wadaa baabuur dabdemis oo weyn oo [midab cas leh].

The only exception is when a descriptive relative clause follows immediately after an **indefinite common noun**. Then no conjunction is used.

Ilmuhu waxa uu u baahan yahay in la mudo si looga tallaalo cudurro [halis ah].

Booliska, dhakhtarrada iyo barayaashu waxa ay deriska u hayaan shago [waxtar leh].

Ragga dabdemisku waxa ay adeegsadaan jaranjaro [ay ku gaaraan dadka [ku xannibma gudaha dhismaha dheer ee [gubanaya]]].

12.4 The Circumstantial Construction

Proper noun (names) and personal pronouns can only be followed by descriptive relative clauses, never by restrictive ones. That is because the purpose of this type of words is to uniquely identify a person, place etc.

In Somali this kind of words, especially the personal pronouns, are very frequent in a specific kind of construction, where the head noun and the relative clause only occur as a loosely associated addition to the main clause. The head noun of the subclause does not necessarily play any specifically important role in the main clause.

This kind of relative clause can occur both before and after the main clause.

Hase yeeshee maalin iyaga oo [garoonka ku sii socda] ayey maqleen onkod roob.

² **Descriptive** (e.g. Gebert 1992) relative clauses are also often called **non-restrictive** (e.g. Kroeger 2005), **appositive** (e.g. Frascarelli & Puglielli 2005) or **supplementary** (e.g. Huddleston, Pullum & Reynolds 2022) relative clauses.

12.5 New Relative Pronouns through Grammaticalisation?

The same kind of construction as the above mentioned circumstantial construction can also have the distal demonstrative pronouns (*kaas, taas, kuwaas*) as the head word. The pronouns are often written together with the conjunction (*kaasoo, taasoo, kuwaasoo* or *kaas oo, taas oo, kuwaas oo*; 42% contracted forms vs. 58% separately written forms in HaBiT).

These contracted words behave almost like relative pronouns, but an important restriction still remains: this type of relative clause usually occurs only after the whole main clause, which shows that the relative clause is not fully integrated with the main clause.

*Tuulo kastaa waxa ay doorataa guddoomiye iyo xoghaye, **kuwaas oo** ilaaliya danaha tuulada.*

*Kulan aqooneedku wuxuu ka kooban yahay ugu yaraan seddex qof **kuwaas oo** kulmaya ugu yaraan seddex jeer.* (Student translation of: En studiecirkel består av minst tre personer som träffas minst tre gånger.)

12.6 The Form of the Verb in Relative Clauses

If there is a subject word in the relative clause, i.e. the head word of the relative clause is not its subject, then the verb in the relative clause will be in the present subjunctive or in the past indicative.

*Soo ogaada halka [**uu** ka **helo** waxyaabaha [**uu** dukaanka ku **iibiyo**]].*

*Derisyada intooda badani waxa ay leeyihiin laba ama saddex makhaayadood oo [**ay dadku** ka **shaahaan**].*

*Uga warrama ardayda fasalkiinna waxa [**aad** soo **aragteen**].*

If there is no subject word in the relative clauses, i.e. the head word of the relative clauses also functions as the subject of the relative clauses, the the verb in the relative clause will be in one of the reduce indicative form.

*Soo ogaada inta qof ee kale ee [**ka shaqaysa** dukaanka].*

*Marka hore dhakhtarka ayaa qora nooca dawada [**wax u taraysa** bukaanka].*

*Ka dib qofka [**buka**] ayaa dawada ka soo iibsada farmasiga.*

If the subclause is negated with *aan*, the verb will always be in the reduced subjunctive form (simple *-n, -in, -nin*, or progressive *-ayn, -aynin*).

*Dadku waxa ay u baahan yihiin in ay iibsadaan walxaha [**aanay** samayn **karin** ama beeran **karin**].*

If the head word of the subclause is the subject of the matrix clause, the last word in the subclause should take one of the subject endings *-aa*, *-i* or *-u*.

Verb forms ending in *-o* or *-a* change into *-aa*.

*Waa maxay shaqada [ay Aamina **samaynaysaa**]?
Saddexdan qof ee [aad **arkaysaa**] waa Saxarla walaalaheed. (Saxarla)*

In negative subclauses, verb forms ending in *-n* add the subject ending *-i*.

*Qaybta [aan la beddeli **karini**] waa xuquuqda qofka Soomaaliga ah dastuurku siiyey.*

The subject ending *-i* is also added to *ah* and *leh*.

*Libaaxa [labka **ahi**] waxa uu leeyahay dhogor badan.*

As usual, definite noun forms ending in *-a* change into *-u*.

*Xaggee ayaa ay ka timid **tamarta** [gubaysa warqaddu]?*

12.7 Word order in relative clauses

12. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

12.1 Find five sentences – not too long ones – that contain a relative clause. Mark the relative clause with square brackets. Underline the head word of the relative clause. Mark the matrix clause and the relative clause verb with boldface. What is the head words **external and internal grammatical relation** (its role in the matrix clause and in the relative clause, respectively)? E.g.

*Xasan oo [madaxa **ruxaya**] ayaa **yiri** “Maya.”
internal: subject, external: subject*

12.2 Write three sentences with a relative clause that contains a preposition that refers to the head noun of the relative clause. E.g.

*Hoosta ka xariiq erayada [uu **ku** jiro xarafka x]!*

12.3 Write three sentences with a relative clause that contains a “pronominal copy” of the head noun, i.e. a possessive ending referring back to the head noun. E.g.

*Waa maxay dhererka dhinaca labajibbaarane [wareeggi**isu** yahay 44 sm]?*

12.4 Write three sentences with a **restrictive** relative clause which is the **first modifier** of the head noun. Underline the head noun and mark the restrictive relative clause with square brackets.

12.5 Write three sentences with a **restrictive** relative clause which is the **second modifier** of the head noun. Underline the head noun and mark the restrictive relative clause with square brackets.

12.6 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **first modifier** of an **indefinite** head noun. Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.7 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **second modifier** of an **indefinite** head noun. Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.8 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **modifier** of a **definite** head noun. Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.9 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **modifier** of a **proper** noun (name). Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.10 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **modifier** of a **personal pronoun**. Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.11 Write three sentences with a **descriptive** relative clause which is the **modifier** of a **demonstrative pronoun**. Underline the head noun and mark the descriptive relative clause with square brackets.

12.12 Write three sentences with a relative clause whose head word is the subject of the matrix clause. The verb in the subclause should bear the subject ending *-aa*. Underline the head noun and mark the relative clause with square brackets.

12.13 Write three sentences with a relative clause whose head word is the subject of the matrix clause. The verb in the subclause should bear the subject ending *-i*. Underline the head noun and mark the relative clause with square brackets.

12.14 Write three sentences with a relative clause whose head word is the subject of the matrix clause. The last word of the subclause should be a noun ending in *-u*. Underline the head noun and mark the relative clause with square brackets.

Unit 13 – Valence-changing operations

Read: Kroeger (2005), Chapter 14, pages 270–282.

Saeed, John Ibrahim. 1989. Morphological Causatives and Verbal Argument Structure in Somali. In *Proceedings of the second international symposium on Cushitic and Omotic languages, Naples, Italy, 16-18 November, 1989*, edited by Giorgio Banti, 1–15. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale. <http://hdl.handle.net/2307/5869>

Saeed, John Ibrahim. 1995. The semantics of middle voice in Somali. *African Languages and Cultures* 8(1), 61–85. <http://hdl.handle.net/2307/2163>

13. Key Concepts

Valence: terms = subject & objects

Intransitive, transitive, ditransitive verbs

Oblique arguments

Passive, Anticuasative, Causative, Reflexive, Reciprocal, Autobenefactive

13.1 Valence changes

The valence of a verb are the terms of a verb, i.e. the **subject**, **object** and **object₂**, but not the oblique arguments (usually accompanied by a preposition).

Basic verb are intransitive, transitive or ditransitive.

intransitive, e.g. *ordaa*

transitive, e.g. *cunaa*

ditransitive, e.g. *siiyaa*

Many languages have widely used grammatical forms or constructions that serve to change the valence patterns of verbs.

13.1 The Passive

Many languages have a passive form of the verb (Sw. *skrivās* ‘write.INF.PASS’, *skrivs* ‘write.PRS.PASS’, *skrevs* ‘write.PST.PASS’) or a passive construction (En. *be written* (INF.PASS), *is written* (PRS.PASS), *was written* (PST.PASS)).

Transitive verbs can be used in the passive in order to shift the word order and thereby shift the topic/focus relation between the agent and the patient/theme of the clause.

Läkaren opererade flickan (för blindtarmen).

agent patient
SUBJECT OBJECT

Flickan blev opererad av läkaren.

patient agent
SUBJECT OBLIQUE

The passive can also be used in order to not reveal the identity of the agent.

Flickan blev opererad (för blindtarmen).

patient
SUBJECT

Passivization therefore changes a transitive verb (SUBJ=agent + OBJ=patient/theme) into an intransitive one (SUBJ=patient/theme).

Somali doesn't have any passive verb forms, nor does it have a passive construction.

Somali word order is very flexible, and the topic/focus relation between the NP's can easily be change through a change in word order or the use of different focus particles.

*Shire Jaamac waxa uu qoray buugga "Gabayo, maahmaah iyo sheekooyin yaryar."
Buugga "Gabayo, maahmaah iyo sheekooyin yaryar" waxa qoray Shire Jaamac Axmed.*

The agents identity can be kept unknown through the use of the indefinite subject pronoun *la* 'one' in an active clause.

... jidadka iyo aqalladana waa la qurxiyaa. Waxaa la qalaa xoolo badan, cunto badanna waa la sameeyaa. Cuntadan waxaa la siiyaa masaakiinta. (Cilmiga Beesha 4, 1976)

13.2 Anticausatives

There are however forms that slightly resemble the passive. They are however not passive forms, but anticausative forms. In a passive clause, there is always a semantic agent, even if it is not explicitly stated.

In an anticausative clause, however, there is never any agent. What happens in the clause is due to natural forces, not an active participant or a causer.

Biyihii waxay mileen sonkortii iyo milixdii. (Transitive, SUBJ + OBJ)

causer patient

Milixdii iyo sonkortii waxay ku milmeen biyihii. (Intransitive, only SUBJ)

patient oblique

Anti- means ‘the opposite (of)’ and *cause* ‘to make something happen’, hence an anticausative verb is a verb that expresses the opposite of a situation where someone makes/causes something (to) happen, i.e. a situation where **no agent exists**.

The derivational suffix for creating anticausative verbs in Somali is *-m-*.

milaa (transitive) something dissolves something
milmaa (intransitive) something dissolves (by itself)

The conjugation of anticausative verbs include vowel insertion and *m > n* consonant alternations.

wuu milmaa < mil-*_m* -aa
way milantaa < mil-*_m*-t-aa

Other pairs of basic and derived anticausative verbs:

bilaabaa (tr.): *Halkaas bay ilkuhu shaqadooda ka bilaabaan* iyagoo jajabinaya cuntadii.
bilaabmaa (intr.): *Nadaafadu waxa ay ka bilaabantaa* guriga.

13.3 Causative verbs

Another type of very frequent derived verbs in Somali are the so called causatives. The causative verbs add one more term to the event, namely the causer, i.e. someone who causes or makes somebody else do something.

Most causative verbs are formed with the suffix *-i-*.

Causative verbs add a **causer** as the grammatical subject. Most causative verbs also change the grammatical role of the **causee**, i.e. the subject of the basic verb, into the object of the causative verb.

karaa: *Kildhiga saar dabka ilaa ay biyuhu ka karayaan.*
kariyaa: *Ma kariyaa qoyskiinnu biyaha?*

BASIC VERB	CAUSATIVE VERB	
<i>karaa</i>	<i>kariyaa</i>	
‘something boils’	‘someone makes something boil’	
theme	causer	theme
↕	↕	↕
subj	subj	obj
intransitive verb	transitive verb	

More examples:

jabaa (intr.): *Koobkii baa jabay.*
jebiyaa (trans.): *Faadumaa koobkii jebisay.*
toosaa (intr.): *Waan toosay.*
toosiyaa (trans.): *Wuu i toosiyay.*

Some causative verbs add a causer as the subject and causee, i.e. the subject of the basic verb becomes an oblique argument of the causative verb with the preposition *ka*.

qoslaa (intr.): *Ardaydii way qosleen.*
ka qosliyaa (intr.): *Macallinku ardaydii wuu ka qosliyay.*

BASIC VERB	CAUSATIVE VERB	
<i>qoslaa</i>	<i>ka qosliyaa</i>	
'someone laughs'	'someone makes somebody else laugh'	
agent	causer	agent
↓	↓	↓
subj	subj	oblique
intransitive verb	intransitive verb	

Some causative verbs are formed with the morpheme *-sii-*.

Intransitive verbs usually become transitive:

tartamaa (intr.): *Inammadii way tartameen.*
tartansiiyaa (trans.): *Kuma ayuu ahaa xayawaanka tartansiinayay diinka iyo bakaylaha?*

Transitive verbs become ditransitive:

fahmaa (trans.): *Ardaydii darsigii way fahmeen.*
fahamsiiyaa (ditrans.): *Macallinka ayaa ardaydii fahamsiiyay darsigii.*

Certain intransitive verbs remain intransitive. The causee becomes an oblique with *ka*.

ordaa (intr.): *Way ordayeen.*
ka orodsiiyaa (intr.): *...waxaa uu ka orodsiiyey wasiirro badan...*

13.4 Reflexive verbs and constructions

When the same person is both the agent and the patient/theme of a verb, the clause is referred to as reflexive. Some languages use special reflexive pronouns to express this kind of events, while some languages use special verb forms or derived verbs.

Somali uses both the reflexive pronoun *is* 'oneself' and some derived verbs.

Saynisyahanno dhawr ah ayaa is weydiiyey su'aahan...
Immisa jeer ayaa uu wadnuhu is garaacayaa halkii daqiiqo?
Xaaskii Diinku way is qarisay.

It is worth emphasising that Somali has only one reflexive pronoun, whereas some other languages, such as English, have different pronouns for different persons.

I cut myself on the knife.
You cut yourself on the razor.
She cut herself on the scissors.

Some languages simply use certain verb that are usually transitive without an object, i.e. as intransitive verbs, in order to express a reflexive event.

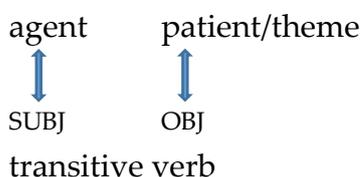
<i>jag toättade kläderna</i>	<i>I washed the clothes</i>
<i>jag toättade mig</i>	<i>I washed</i>
<i>frisören rakade kunden</i>	<i>the barber shaved the customer</i>
<i>jag rakade mig</i>	<i>I shaved</i>

In many such cases, Somali uses special derived verbs with the suffixes *-st/-sad-*, belonging to the 3rd conjugation, e.g.

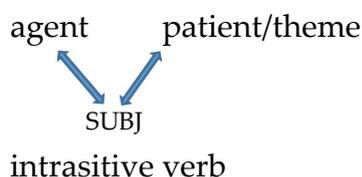
<i>shanleeyaa</i> (tr.):	<i>Gabadha nadiifta ahi timaheeda waa ay shanlaysaa.</i>
<i>u shanleeyaa:</i>	<i>Hooyo waxa ay subax waliba u shanlaysaa Axmed.</i>
<i>shanlaystaa</i> (refl.):	<i>Xasan waa uu shanlaysanayaa.</i>
<i>u qubeeyaa:</i>	<i>Safiya waxay u qubeysay Aamina.</i>
<i>qubaystaa</i> (refl.):	<i>Maalin waliba Sahro waa ay qubaysataa.</i>

Also the reflexive verbs usually become intransitive and take only one term: SUBJ.

Basic verb



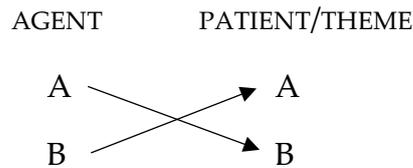
Reflexive Verb



13.5 Reciprocal events

Reciprocal events are in some sense similar to reflexive events, but also quite different.

In reciprocal events, more than one person must be involved. The same people are both the agent and the patient/theme of the action, but it is not the same person that is both agent and patient/theme. Instead different persons are agent and patient/theme. Person A is the agent of an action where person B is the patient/theme, and at the same time person B is the agent of another action where person A is the patient/theme.



Dadkuna way is ilaaliyaan.

Sidee bay isu taageeraan dadka waaweyn?

13.6 Autobenefactive events

Another important type of derived verbs that are very frequent in Somali are the autobenefactive verbs. The derivational suffix is *-t/-d-*. This type of derivation usually does not change the valence of the involved verb. It only adds a sense of “reflexive” beneficiary. The agent of the action is at the same time the beneficiary of the action. The same person, so to say, fills two semantic roles at the same time.

beeraa (m.), *beertaa* (f.) (tr.)

beertaa (m.), *beerataa* (f.) (tr., autoben.)

Sometimes there are three different verbs, one intransitive, and two transitive ones.

karaa (m.), *kartaa* (f.) (intr.)

Bariisku wuu karayaa.

kariyaa (m.), *karisaa* (f.) (tr.)

Waxa uu karinayaa bariiska.

karsadaa (m.), *karsataa* (f.) (tr., autoben.)

Waxa uu karsanayaa bariiska.

Sometimes there are instead two intransitive verbs, and only one transitive.

diiraa (m.), *diirtaa* (f.) (intr.)

diiriyaa (m.), *diirisaa* (f.) (tr.)

diirsadaa (m.), *diirsataa* (f.) (intr., autoben.)

13. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

13.1 Find three intransitive verbs and make a short sentence with each verb.

13.2 Find three transitive verbs and make short sentences with each verb.

13.3 Find three ditransitive verbs and make short sentences with each verb.

13.4 Choose a transitive verb. Write the same sentence in six versions.

- a. Use SVO word order and focus the subject.
- b. Use SVO word order and focus the object.
- c. Use OVS word order and focus the subject.
- d. Use OVS word order and focus the object.
- e. Use SVO word order with the indefinite subject pronoun.
- f. Use OSV word order with the indefinite subject pronoun.

13.5 Find three anticausative verbs. Use each verb in a clause. Also write an equivalent clause with the corresponding basic verb.

13.6 Find three basic **intransitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the suffix *-i-* and they should **not** take the preposition *ka*. Use each verb in a small clause.

Waan toosay. *Wuu i* toosiyay.

13.7 Find three basic **intransitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the suffix *-i-* and they **should** take the preposition *ka*. Use each verb in a small clause.

Ardaydii way qosleen. *Macallinku ardaydii* wuu ka qosliyay.

13.8 Find three basic **intransitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the morpheme *-sii-* and they should **not** take the preposition *ka*. Use each verb in a small clause.

Inammadii way tartameen.
Kuma ayuu ahaa xayawaanka tartansiinayay diinka iyo bakaylaha?

13.9 Find three basic **intransitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the morpheme *-sii-* and they **should** take the preposition *ka*. Use each verb in a small clause.

Way ordayeen. ...waxaa *uu* ka orodsiiyey *wasiirro badan*...

13.10 Find three basic **transitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the suffix *-i-*. Use each verb in a small clause.

13.11 Find three basic **transitive** verbs with corresponding causative verbs. These three causative verbs should be derived with the suffix *-sii-*. Use each verb in a small clause.

Ardaydii darsigii way fahmeen. Macallinka ayaa ardaydii fahamsiiyay darsigii.

13.12 Find three verbs that can be used with the reflexive pronoun in a truly reflexive meaning (not reciprocal!). Make small clauses with these verbs.

13.13 Find three verbs that have some kind of reflexive meaning and that are derived with the suffix *-st-/sad-* and belong to the 3rd conjugation. Use the verbs in small clauses, e.g. *Xasan waa uu shanlaysanayaa.*

13.14 Find three verbs that can be used with the reflexive pronoun in a **reciprocal** meaning. Make small clauses with these verbs, e.g. *Dadkuna way is ilaaliyaan.*

13.15 Find three basic **intransitive** verbs with a corresponding intransitive autobenefactive verb. Write small clauses with all the verb, both the basic ones and the autobenefactive ones, e.g. *diiraa* (m.), *diirtaa* (f.) – *diirsadaa* (m.), *diirsataa* (f.)

13.16 Find three basic **transitive** verbs with a corresponding transitive autobenefactive verb. Write small clauses with all the verb, both the basic ones and the autobenefactive ones, e.g. *Waxa uu karinayaa bariiska. Waxa uu karsanayaa bariiska.*

Unit 14 – Information packaging & Word Order

Read:

Gebert, Lucyna. 1986. Focus and word order in Somali. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 5. 43–69.

Gebert, Lucyna. 1988. Universal hierarchy of topicality and Somali syntax. In Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst & Fritz Serzisko (eds.), *Cushitic – Omotic: Papers from the international symposium on Cushitic and Omotic languages, Cologne, January 6-9, 1986*, 591–604. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

Saeed, John Ibrahim. 2000. The functions of focus in Somali. *Lingua Posnaniensis* 42. 133–143.

14. Key Concepts

Focus is a grammatical concept. In a Somali clause, a certain word or phrase is grammatically marked as focused through the use of a focus particle.

Word order is a grammatical concept. For information packaging, mainly the order of phrases is important, e.g. SOV, SVO, OSV, OVS etc.

New information (or **comment**) is a semantic concept. It refers to information that is introduced (or re-introduced) into the centre of attention. In Somali, new information is often – but not always – marked by focus.

Topic = Old / Given information is a semantic concept. It refers to information that has already earlier been introduced into the centre of attention. NP's occur before the focus or after the VP are typically interpreted as as topics/given.

Information packaging is the sum of these four “tools” and how they work together as a system in order to organise the content (message) conveyed by clauses and texts.

14.1 “All New”-clauses

Semantically, the information content of a clause is divided into **Given** and **New**. Especially at the beginning of a story, all the information in a clause is often presented as New.

The most common way to mark “all new”-clauses in Somali is to use *baa/ayaa* after the first NP, which is usually the subject, e.g.

Nin baa beri kayn ka helay daayeer yar.

Nin dhallinyaro ah ayaa arkay nin oday ah oo kildhi culus sida.

Wiil Xasan la yidhaahdo ayaa aabbihi u raacay masaajidka si ay ugu soo tukadaan salaadda Jimcaha.

But an “all new”-clause may also start with another focused sentence constituent, such as on object or an adverbial, followed by the subject NP and the VP. In that case there is usually **no short subject pronoun**, even though the subject is not focused. The reason is that short subject pronouns indicate that the subject is Given, not New.

Adv=Foc Subj Verb (Obj/Adv)

Beri baa nin soo iibsadey kabo cusub.

Maalin maalmaha ka mid ah ayaa nin oday ihi ku socday gurigiisii.

A third strategy is to use two focus particles and let *baa/ayaa* focus a non-subject NP (often an time/place adverbial) at the beginning of the clause, whereas *waxa* usually focuses the subject at the end of the clause, e.g.

Adv=Foc Verb Foc=Subj

Beri baa waxa jiri jiray nin caqli badan.

But, of course, not all stories begin with an “all new”-clause. Many stories begin with ordinary clauses, where some part(s) of the clause is/are given, i.e. topic(s).

Two typical characteristics of an “all new”-clause: (1) The very first NP is focused; (2) There is no short subject pronoun.

14.2 Topic or Given information

Noun phrases that occur before the focus or after the VP (if not focused by *waxa*) are normally interpreted as topics, i.e. given information.

If the subject is topic/given, it is expressed with a short subject pronoun in statements.

14.3 Focus or New information

Noun phrases that are focused are interpreted as new information, at least new in the context that is at hand. Sometimes a NP that was in the center of attention a while ago is felt to have faded away, and therefore it may be re-introduced to the centre of attention by focus.

If the subject of the clause is new information (usually also focused), there will be no short subject pronoun in the clause.

14.4 Basic word order

S O V is considered the basic word order for Somali, But this basic word order can be used for the different information packaging strategies, depending on which of the three constituents that is focused. Colours are used in the following way:

Old / Given information versus New information

S **O**^{Foc=Pro} **V** is considered the basic sentence structure. The subject (*Cali*) is given (known, old) information, and the rest is new. This is marked by the focus on *tufaax*. This kind of basic information packaging structure can answer a question of the type

- *Cali muxuu sameeyey?*
- *Cali tufaax buu cunay.*

S^{Foc} **O** **V** gives an “all new”-clause.

- *Maxaa dhacay?*
- *Cali baa tufaax cunay.*

S **O**^{FocPro} **V** is a sentence structure where only the verb is new information. Therefore the focus is on the verb. Both *Cali* and *tufaax* are given information/topics. This kind of structure could answer a question like

- *Cali tufaaxa maxaa uu lalku (???) sameeyey?* ‘What did Ali do with the apple?’
- *Cali tufaaxa wuu cunay.*

14.5 Marked word order

O^{FocPro} **S** **V**

If the word order is inverted, and the sentences starts with a focused object followed by the short subject pronoun, this indicates that the subject is old information, and so is the verb that follows after it. The different status of the verb is the reason for the different patterns

- a. – *Cali muxuu sameeyey?*
- b. – *Cali tufaax buu cunay.*
- c. – **Tufaax buu Cali cunay.* the subject clitic indicates that subj and **verb** are old info
- a. – *Cali muxuu cunay?*
- b. – *Tufaax buu Cali cunay.*
- c. – **Tufaax baa Cali cunay.* no subject clitic indicates that subject is new info

O^{Foc} S V (as well as **S^{Foc} O V**)

a. – Maxaa dhacay?

b. – Tufaax baa Cali cunay.

c. – *Tufaax buu Cali cunay. subject clitic indicates that subject is old info

d. – Cali baa tufaax cunay.

14.6 Focusing only one constituent as new information

Focusing only the subject as new information

Special structure: **O S^{Foc} V**

General structure: **S^{Foc} O V** but usually: **S^{Foc} O V**

a. – Maryan yaa dilay? / Yaa Maryan dilay?

b. – Maryan Cali baa dilay.

c. – Cali baa Maryan dilay.

Gebert (1986: 52) claims that (b) is generally preferred, e.g. *Wiilkii dhurwaa baa qaatay.*

Focusing only the object as new information

Special structure: **O^{FocPro} S V**

General structure: **S O^{FocPro} V** but usually: **S O^{FocPro} V**

a. – Cali yuu dilay? / Yuu Cali dilay? / Yuu dilay Cali?

b. – Maryan buu Cali dilay.

c. – Cali Maryan buu dilay.

14.6 Topicalising only one constituent as given information

Topicalising only the subject as old information

Special structure: **O^{FocPro} V S**

General structure: **???**

a. – Cali muxuu sameeyey?

b. – Maryan buu dilay Cali.

?? Maryan buu Cali dilay. — < Cali yuu dilay?

?? Cali Maryan buu dilay.

Focusing only the object as old information

Special structure: **S^{Foc} V O**

General structure: **???**

a. – Maxaa ku dhacay Maryan?

b. – Cali baa dilay Maryan.

14. Questions, Exercises & Assignments

14.1 Have a look at five different short stories. Copy the first sentence from those stories and list the sentences here. Are they typical “all new”-clauses or not?

14.2 Another context that triggers an “all new”-clause is the question “Maxaa dhacay?” Put together five different sentences that would work well as answers to that question. Try to make the sentences as syntactically different as possible.

14.3 Is there a difference between these two situations?

YAA Maryan dilay?

(We heard that a girl called Maryan was hit, and we want to know who did it.)

Yaa MARYan dilay?

(We heard that two girls were hit, and we also heard who hit the other one, but now we also want to know who hit Maryan)

14.4 If there is a difference between the two questions in 14.3, what about the answers to those two questions? Will there be some kind of difference in the answers?

14.5 Read all the examples in my summary as well as in the the articles carefully. Are there any examples that you think sound strange. Write down the strange examples together with the source (text) and the page number (or example number). Explain what is strange about each example and suggest a better example.