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We offer <u>net-based courses</u> in Somali free of charge for citizens of the EU and EEA

BEGINNER'S Somali Grammar

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Updated 06.01.2023

Will be updated for autumn term 2023. Don't print anything yet.

This is work in progress. Read it critically! Feel free to contact me with comments. morgan.nilsson@gu.se

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Abbreviations

sb.	somebody
sth.	something

§ 1. The Somali Speaking Areas

Somali is spoken by more than 25 million people, making it approximately the 10th largest language in Africa and 70th largest in the world. Most Somali speakers live in five states in the Horn of Africa, but there is also a large diaspora that can be found practically all around the world.

State	No of speakers	Official language	Previous colonial power
Djibouti	ca 0.5 mill.	French, Arabic	France
Ethiopia	ca 6.5 mill.	national: Amharic; regional: Somali	
Kenya	ca 2.5 mill.	English, Swahili	Britain
Somalia	ca 9–11 mill.	Somali	Italy
$Somaliland^1$	ca 4 mill.	Somali	Britain
elsewhere	1–3 mill.		

§1.1 Regional Variation within Standard Somali

There are certain differences in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation between the individual Somali regions. The differences in grammar and pronunciation are quite small, but the differences in the vocabulary are more noticeable. To a certain degree one could compare the different varieties of Somali with English, Spanish or French in various countries around the world, with German in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Luxemburg, or with Swedish in Sweden and Finland.

§ 1.1.1 Variation in the Pronunciation

The largest difference in the pronunciation concerns the voiced postalveolar retroflex stop $/dh/^2$ (cf. § 3.2). This phoneme is not used to the same extent in all Somali speaking areas. In the north-west (approximately Somaliland, Djibouti and the northern part of the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia) /dh/ may occur in any position in a word. In the remaining areas

¹ Somaliland declared itself independent from Somalia in 1991, but no other country has recognised Somaliland so far. In practice, however, Somaliland functions as an independent state with its own parliament, currency, army etc.

² Approximately like Swedish and Norwegian /rd/, similar to /d/, but pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching a point higher up (farther back) on the roof of the mouth.

/dh/ normally doesn't occur after a vowel, where /r/ is used instead of /dh/. Both manners of pronunciation and spelling are considered equally correct in standard Somali.

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After a vowel there is a regional variation between /dh/ and/r/.

gabádh<sup>N</sup> or gabár<sup>s</sup> girl

ádhi<sup>N</sup> or ári<sup>s</sup> goats and sheep

At the beginning of words /dh/ is used in all areas.

dhálo bottle, glass (as material)

Also after a consonant /dh/ is used in all areas.

gabdhó girls
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§ 1.1.2 Variation in word forms

A few nouns which often end in /o/ in the middle and the southern parts of the Somali speaking area have a tendency to end in /a/ in the northern parts. This happens, e.g., in the numbers **lábo/lába** *two* and **toddóbo/ toddóba** *seven*, but this variation is especially frequent word-finally in women's names.

Sáhra^N / Sáhro^s, Faadúma^N / Faadúmo^s, Caásha^N / Caásho^s

Personal preferences in combination with geographic factors influence the choice of form. The forms which end in /o/ may by some speakers be perceived as more typically Somali, maybe because the forms in /a/ resemble the European and Arabic form of these names, however both forms have an equal status in the standard language.

§ 1.1.3 Variation in the Vocabulary

The differences between regions are easiest to notice in the vocabular.

qáre^s or xábxab[№] watermelon **jaálle^s or húrdi**[№] yellow **ukún^s or béed**[№] egg With respect to loanwords, the middle and southern parts of Somalia were for many decades mainly influenced by Italian, whereas Somaliland was instead influenced by English. In Ethiopia there has also been some influence from Amharic, and in Djibouti from French. The largest influences in all Somali speaking areas are however from Arabic, but today the influence of English is rapidly growing in all Somali areas, just like in many other parts of the world.

usbúuc (from Ar. 'usbuu^c), **wíig**^N (from En. week), **sitimáan**^S (from It. settimana) or **toddobáad** (purely Somali) all meaning *week*

shukumáan^s (from It. asciugamano) or **tuwáal**^N (from En. towel) both meaning *towel*

§ 2. The Script

Somali was introduced as the official language of Somalia on 1 January 1973 after a decision announced by the government on 21 October 1972. It was decided that Somali was to be written with the Latin script. Earlier, Arabic script as well as a few scripts especially invented for Somali had also been used to some extent. The choice of the Latin script was mainly due to economical considerations as most of the typewriters and printing presses in the country had been used to write the previous colonial languages, i.e. Italian in the south, middle and east, and English in the northwest.

§ 2.1 The Alphabet

The traditional order of the letters in the Somali alphabet is B, T, J, X, KH, D, R, S, SH, DH, C, G, F, Q, K, L, M, N, W, H, Y, A, E, I, O, U.

This is the order of the letters in the Arabic alphabet, and it should probably be regarded as a symbolic remedy to those who in the 1950's and 1960's wanted to establish the Arabic script for Somali.

The traditional order isn't, however, used very much for practical purposes, e.g., when arranging the words in a dictionary or a list of names in alphabetical order.

The only situation in which the traditional order is applied reguarly is when the letters of the alphabet are used for numbering sub-sections in a numbered list.

- b) Muqdisho
 t) Hargeysa
 j) Boosaaso
 b) Jabbuuti
 t) Jigjiga
 - j) Kismaayo x) Garoowe

§ 2.2 Orthography

Somali spelling and the use of punctuation marks has never been thoroughly regulated by any institution or in any reference book. There are however quite a few rules scattered troughout different schoolbooks as well as a fifty year old tradition to take guidance from. The spelling in printed texts is after all relatively homogenous, and when it is not, it is most often possible to find a consensus regarding which spelling of a specific word should be considered the "best" one.

§ 2.3 Capital Letters

In Somali, capital letters are used in almost the same way as in English, i.e., in names, including the names of the months and the days of the week, as well as in words denoting nationalities and languages. It is also quite common to write the names of the seasons and the four cardinal directions with a capital letter.

Soomáaliya	Somalia
Soomaáli	a Somali
af Soomaáli	Somali (langauge)
Sábti	Saturday
Abríil	April
Jiiláal / jiiláal	winter/summer (warm and dry season, Dec.–Feb.)
Koonfúr / koonfúr	south

§ 2.4 Double Letters

Double letters are used in Somali to represent longer vowels (**aa**, **ee**, **ii**, **oo**, **uu**) and more intense consonants, namely the three stops **bb**, **dd**, **gg** and the four sonorants **ll**, **mm**, **nn**, **rr**. The rest of the consonants are never doubled, even though some speakers pronounce them as slightly longer or more intense in certain words.

The following rules are particularly important.

§ 2.4.1 -gg-/-dd- in nouns with a suffix

If a masculine noun ends in -g, all forms with a determiner suffix will be written (and pronounced) with a double (intense) -gg- due to assimilation of the /k/ in the suffix with the /g/ in the stem.

búug book	búu <mark>gg</mark> a	the book	< *búug–ka
	búu <mark>gg</mark> ayga	my book	< *búug–kayga
	búu <mark>gg</mark> aaga	your book	< *búug–kaaga

If a feminine noun ends in **-d**, all forms with a determiner suffix will be written (and pronounced) with a double (intense) **-dd-** due to assimilation of the /t/ in the suffix with the /d/ in the stem.

bisád cat	bisá <mark>dd</mark> a	the cat	<*bisád–ta
	bisá <mark>dd</mark> ayda	my cat	<*bisád–tayda
	bisá <mark>dd</mark> aada	your cat	<*bisád-taada

§ 2.4.2 -nn- in the 1st and 2nd person plural

The verb endings in the 1st person plural (**-nay**, **-naa**, **-na**, **-no**) contain a double **-nn**- in all instances where the **-nn**- occurs between two vowels. The same is also true for the possessive endings in the 1st and 2nd person plural (**-eenna** *our*, **-iinna** *your*), as well as the long personal pronouns in the 1st person plural (**annaga**, **innaga** *we*) and the short subject pronoun (**aannu** *we*).

Waa in aynu ilaalinnaa nadaafadda ilaha biyaheenna.

We have to look after the hygiene in our sources of water.

Cuntada kama maaranno. We can't manage without food.

§ 3. The Sound System

Compared to many other languages, the Somali spelling reflects the pronunciation in a very straightforward way.

§ 3.1 Vowels

Somali has five letters representing vowels: **i**, **e**, **a**, **o**, **u**. The most frequent way of pronouncing each of these vowels is approximately the same as in many other languages that have five vowels, e.g., Spanish or Czech. One could also compare them to the pronunciation of the vowels in the English words *swim*, *bed*, *car*, *more*, *shoe*.

§ 3.1.1 Heavy vowels

The Somali vowel system is more complex than the spelling reveals, as each vowel letter may be pronounced in two different ways. There is a second, less frequent way of pronouncing each letter. Those sounds are produce with larger tension in the throat, and they are traditionally referred to as heavy vowels. They only occur in certain words.

In order to render heavy vowels in dictinaries and grammar books, different systems have been proposed: a comma, a cedilla, or a "tail" under the letter, i.e. **i**, **e**, **a**, **o**, **u**, or two dots above the letter, i.e. **ï**, **ë**, **ä**, **ö**, **ü**. If needed, ordinary vowels may be underlined, i.e. **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**.

Orc	<u>linary vowels</u>		Somali words with ordinary vowels
/i/	appr. like Eng.	sit	<mark>Somali examples</mark>
/e/		less	
/a/		arm	
/o/		hot	
/u/		soup	
Hea	avy pronunciation		Somali words with heavy vowels
i	appr. like Eng.	police	<mark>Somali examples</mark>
e		convey	

a *apple* o appr. like French *sœur* u appr. like French *sur*

It is however important to stress that the comparisons made with English and French are only approximations. The European "heavy" vowels are simply pronounced by putting the tongue closer to the front of the mouth, whereas the Somali heavy vowels are also accompanied by a tension in the throat.

Unfortunately, the reasearch into the Somali heavy vowels is very limited. It is therefore not possible to present any exact principles for their use. The vowel quality is also not noted systematically in any existing dictionary. It is however very seldom the case that this subtle difference in vowel quality would be the only difference between two different words. Consequently, the best advice is simply to listen carefully to Somali speakers and imitate their pronunciation as closely as possible.

§ 3.1.2 Short and long vowels

All the Somali vowels, both the ordinary ones and the heavy ones, occur both as short and long. The long vowels are written as double.

u to, for	versus	uu he, it
i me		ii to me, for me
ku in, on; you		kuu to you, for you

§ 3.1.3 Diphthongs

Somali has three diphthongs. Their spelling and pronunciation may vary a bit: **ey/ay, ow/aw, oy.** It has never been regulated for standard Somali whether one should write <ey> and <ow>, which often might be closer to the pronunciation, or <ay> and <aw>. In the 1970's the spelling with <ey> and <ow> was somewhat more frequent than it is nowadays. At present, especially <ay> has become evidently more common than <ey>.

§ 3.2 Consonants

More than half of the 22 Somali consonants are pronounced in more or less the same way as in English. This applies to **b**, **d**, **f**, **g**, **h**, **j**, **k**, **l**, **m**, **n**, **s**, **sh**, **t**, **w**, **y**. The sounds /t/ and /k/ are accompanied by aspiration, i.e. a distinct burst of breath, just like in English.

Somali has three **digraphs**, i.e. combinations of two letters representing one sound: <dh>, <kh> and <sh>.

The sound /dh/ is very similar to the Swedish and Norwegian sound written <rd>. It is similar to a /d/, but pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching a point higher up, above the alveolar ridge. YouTube³ and Wikipedia⁴ offer further helpful details.

The sound /j/ may be pronounced in two different ways, mainly depending on region. It is either more voiced (like <j> in Eng. *joke, Jane, Jeep*) or more voiceless (like <ch> in Eng. *choke, chain, cheap*). In today's standard Somali, it seems to have become common to pronounce /j/ as rather voiceless in the north and as quite voiced in the south. Listen carefully to native speakers.

When a single **<b**, **d**, **g>** occurs between two vowels it is pronounced as "softer" or "slacker", like the sounds [β , δ , γ] which are characteristic for, e.g., Modern Greek and Spanish in words such as *adiós*, *saber*, *pagar*. The [δ] is of course similar to English **<**th>> in *this*.

$Hibo^{\circ}$, Liibaan^o, Hodan^o, Idil^o, Ladan^o, Faadumo^o, Magan^o, ...

Double **<bb**, **dd**, **gg>** are however pronounced more distinctly and with more energy, quite similar to the corresponding English consonants in words like *hobby*, *sudden*, *beggar*.

³ <dh> <u>https://youtu.be/nU7H_aiG-kc</u>

^{4 &}lt;dh> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced retroflex plosive

The Somali /r/ differs from how it is usually pronounced in English. It is quite similar to the trilled or rolled /r/ sound in Italian or Spanish, but sometimes it becomes voiceless at the beginning and end of words.

Also double **<ll, mm, nn, rr**> are pronounced with some extra energy and duration.

The letters **<c, kh, q, x, '>** represent sounds that are correspond closely to the Arabic counterparts: $\mathbf{c} = \boldsymbol{\xi}$, $\mathbf{kh} = \boldsymbol{\xi}$, $\mathbf{q} = \boldsymbol{\xi}$, $\mathbf{x} = \boldsymbol{\zeta}$, $\mathbf{r} = \boldsymbol{\xi}$.

The <**c**> is rather similar to a very voiced /h/. Pronouncing /h/ the air flow is given a free passage through the throat, but when pronouncing /c/ the tongue root is pushed backwards towards the back of the throat in order to constrict the air flow into a narrow channel, thereby causing turbulence. This sound is often perceived by Europeans as a "creaky" /a/. For Somalis, however, there is no doubt that this sound is a consonant. YouTube⁵ offers a helpful explanation and sound illustration.

Cali^{\circ}, Cumar^{\circ}, Cabdi^{\circ}, Jaamac^{\circ}, Sacdiya^{\circ}, Nimco^{\circ}

The **<kh**> is similar to **<**ch> in German *Bach* or Scottish *Loch Ness*. YouTube⁶ offers a helpful explanation and sound illustration.

Khadra $^{\circ}$, Sheekh $^{\circ}$, Khaalid $^{\circ}$, Kheyre $^{\circ}$, Khadiijo $^{\circ}$

The sound /kh/ is a bit exotic in Somali. It occurs almost exclusively in words of Arabic origin. Therefore, some speakers have a tendency to replace it with /q/.

The $<\mathbf{q}>$ is rather similar to /k/ or /g/, but the tongue is pushed backwards towards the so called uvula instead of up towards the hard palate. Voiced pronunciation (similar to /g/) is more common between vowels, whereas voiceless pronunciation (similar to /k/) is more common at the beginning

⁵ <c> <u>https://youtu.be/3057MbWmH1k</u>

⁶ <kh> <u>https://youtu.be/y5AizU69VOA</u>

and end of words. YouTube⁷ offers a helpful explanation and sound illustration.

Muqdisho, Qarshi $^{\circ}$, Ruqiya $^{\circ}$, Cabdiqani $^{\circ}$, Qaali $^{\circ}$

The <**x**> is rather similar to a voiceless /h/, but in order to pronounce /x/ the tongue root needs to be pushed backwards against the back of the throat (the pharynx), in order to constrict the air flow into a narrow channel, causing friction or turbulence. This sound is often perceived by European as a "breathy" version of /h/. YouTube⁸ offers a helpful explanation and sound illustration.

Farxiyo^{\circ}, Xasan^{\circ}, Maxamed^{\circ}, Maxamuud^{\circ}, Xamdi^{\circ}, Xaddiyo^{\circ}, Axmed^{\circ}

The letter <'> is pronounced as a so called "glottal stop", as in the Cockney pronunciation *bu'er* for *butter*. It is produced by a rapid closure, bringing the vocal folds together, as when holding one's breath. When the air flow is then released again, this sound emerges.

Israa'iil, Sa'iir; Daa'uud $^{\circ}$, Faa'iso $^{\circ}$

The letters <**p**>, <**v**>, <**z**> are not used in Somali since the corresponding sounds are not phonemes, i.e., used to differentiate between Somali words. However, the sound [p] is sometimes pronounced as a voiceless version of /b/ at the beginning or end of words, as well as before another voiceless consonant, e.g. **kab** [k^hap] *shoe*, **kabta** [k^hapt^ha] *the shoe*. The letter <z> and the sound [z] are sometimes encountered in words of Arabic origin, such as the woman's name **Zamzam**. Some speakers prefer to pronounce it with a voiced [z], but the purely Somali pronunciation [samsam] is more frequent, and the purely Somali spelling is of course **Samsam**.

^{7 &}lt;q> voiced (mainly between vowels) <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQrmm4oLR3Q</u> <q> voiceless <u>https://youtu.be/N98UVs85qII</u>

⁸ <x> <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Al1JaAfr88&t=680s</u>

§ 3.2.1 Intense consonants

Some Somali consonants exhibit a "double", more "intense" version alongside the simple consonant. These more intense consonants are pronounced more distinctly, with more energy, and with a slightly longer duration. There is variation between regions as well as speakers. Listen carefully to native speakers.

Only seven intense consonants are spelled as double: **<bb**, **dd**, **gg**, **mm**, **nn**, **rr**, **ll>**. Also some of the other consonants are in some regions pronounced intensely in certain words, but they are never written with a double consonant in standard Somali.

§ 3.3 Stress or high tone

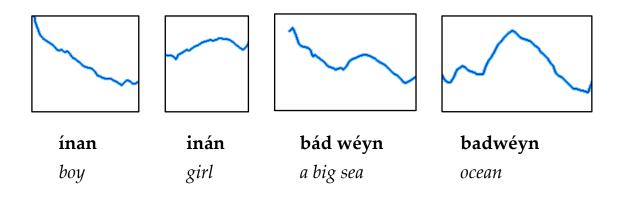
Lägg till detaljerade regler för betoningens placering.

The realisation of word stress in Somali differs from the way stress is realised in most European languages, where it is mainly a question of realising a certain syllable or vowel with more energy. In Somali the main feature of a stressed vowel is that it is pronounced with a higher pitch or a higher tone than the rest of the word.

The Somali stress gives the word a "melody", and the position of the high tone in the word can sometimes serve to differentiate between words that are otherwise identical. In English there are often stress differences between nouns and verbs as in *We're going to record a record*. Also in Somali stress often serves to distinguish between grammatical categories.

ínan boy	inán girl
áfartan these four	afártan forty
hées sing!	heés song
mádow darkness	madów dark (adj.)
bád wéyn a big sea	badwéyn ocean

The pitch tracks below show the pitch level in some of these words. (The pitch is measured by the speed of the vibrations creating the sound.)



§ 3.4 Phonotactics

The phonotactics describes the general principles that govern the ways sounds may be combined into words in a certain language.

§ 3.4.1 Limitations on syllable structure

Many European languages allow syllables that begin or end with two, three, or occasionally even more consonants, as in the English plural form *scripts*.

The Somali syllable structure is very limited. There may not be more than **one** consonant + **one** vowel + **one** consonant in a Somali syllable. This means that Somali words can only begin and end with a single consonant, and inside words there may not be more than two consonants next to each other between vowels.

These limitations have a large impact on loanwords, as their syllable structur often needs to be adjusted, either by insertion of vowels, or by deletion of consonants.

gram	>	Somali: <mark>garaam</mark>
ambula <mark>nc</mark> e	>	Somali: ambalaas

§ 3.4.2 Restrictions on /m/, /t/, /k/

Another restriction in the Somali sound system is the fact that Somali syllables normally do not end with an /m/, /k/ or /t/. Instead /n/, /g/ and /d/ are used as replacements.

Aádan Adam, fílin film, macállin teacher (from Arabic mucallim) tágsi taxi, buskud biscuit, cookie

This may lead to sound changes between different forms.

macálli<u>n</u> teacher, but macalli<u>m</u>ád female teacher tárta<u>n</u> competition, but tartá<u>m</u>ayaa is competing

Exceptions however occur in a small number of newer loanwords, e.g., **átam** *atom*, **garáam** *gram*, and in certain older, but very common borrowings from Arabic, e.g., **muhíim** *something important*, **nidáam** *system*, *plan* **Isláam** *Islam*, **ixtiráam** *respect*, *affection*, as well as in a few proper names, e.g., **Ibraáhim** (m.), **Sámsam** (f.).

Another exception to this principle is that /m/, and not /n/, is pronounced before /b/, since that is much easier to say. Today people usually write **–mb–**, but in the 1970's it was very common to write **–nb–**, probably due to the fact that corresponding words are spelled $\langle \frac{1}{2} \rangle$ (nb) in Arabic.

cámbe (cánbe) mango

There are however a few words where **–nb–** is the absolutely predominant spelling, above all **balanbaális** *butterfly* and **baranbáro** *cockroach*.

§4. Morpho-phonology

Morpho-phonology deals with sound changes that occur when endings are added to words, either to **derive** (i.e. create) new words, or to **inflect** words (i.e. create different grammatical forms of words).

§ 4.1 Alternations of /k/ and /t/

The morphemes /k/ and /t/ frequently serve to mark macsculine and feminine gender. In verb forms /t/ also marks the 2nd person.

After	/k/ becomes	/t/ becomes
/g/	g	
/d/		d
/a/, /u/, /w/	g	d
/i/, /y/	g	d / s ⁱ
/e/, /o/	h	d
/c/, /h/, /x/, /kh/, /q/, / '/	Ø ⁱⁱ	d
/dh/		Ø ⁱⁱ
/l/ ⁱⁱⁱ		sh

Both these consonants are altered in different way after certain sounds.

 $^{\rm i)}$ /s/ in verbs; $^{\rm ii)}$ Ø means that /k/ or /t/ disappears; $^{\rm iii)}$ /l/ disappears;

These alternations are very important for the defininte article as well as the demonstrative and possessive endings, but they also occur in certain verb endings as well as in some other morphemes.

§ 4.1.1 Adjectives like *jecel, nool*

The Somali adjectives **jecél** *fond* (*of something*), **nóol** *living*, *alive* end in /l/. When such adjectives are followed by a verb form that begins with /t/, e.g., tahay *is* (feminine) the alternation mentioned above occurs: /l/+/t/ > /sh/.

wáa uu jecél yahay	he is fond of it, he likes it
wáa ay jecéshahay	she is fond of it, she likes it
< jecél + tahay	y

Since this consonant alternation affects both the adjective and the verb, the two words have to be written as one in the feminine.

§ 4.2 Distant assimilation

Assimilation means that one sound is influenced by another so that they become (more) similar. In some cases a vowel in the stem of a word is affected by a vowel in an ending that is added. This is especially common when the ending contains an /i/ or a /u/.

§ 4.2.1 Distant assminilation across -h-

The most frequent type of distant assimilation is triggered by endings that begin with an /h/. If the ending contains the vowel /i/ or /u/ after the /h/, then an /a/ that precedes the ending is replaced by the same vowel as the one in the ending, i.e., /i/ or /u/.

aábbe father	aabbá-ha the father	aabb <mark>ú-hu</mark>	the father (subj.)
		aabb <mark>í-hii</mark> s	his father
shimbiró birds	shimbirá-ha the birds	shimbir <mark>ú-h</mark> u	u the birds (subj.)
		shimbir <mark>í-h</mark>	iisa his birds
ilkó teeth	ilká-ha the teeth	ilk <mark>ú-hu</mark>	the teeth (subj.)
		ilk <mark>í-hii</mark> sa	his teeth

In the spoken form of words, one can often also hear the influence of a following /e/ or /o/, but such sound changes are usually not reflected by the orthography. The most frequent spelling is, e.g., **ilká-hooda** *their teeth*, **ilká-heeda** *her teeth*, but some people sometimes reflect this type of assimilation in writing, especially in certain expressions, e.g.

aabbáha the father	aabb <mark>á-hee</mark> d	(aabbé-heed) her father
	aabbá-hood	(aabbó-hood) their father

Sometimes some poeple also apply this type of assimilation in the stem of masculine nouns when the stem ends in /x/ or /c/ and the definite,

possessive and demonstrative suffixes are realised without any initial consonant.

mágac name mágac-a the name mágac-iisa (mágic-iisa) his name

§ 4.2.2 Distant assimilation in the infinitive

The same kind of distant asssimilation also occurs in the infinitive. The infinitive ending –i affects the vowel /a/ in certain verb roots that end with one of the back consonant /h/, /x/, /c/, / '/, e.g.

dhacaa falls; happens, inf. dhíci baxaa comes out, inf. bíxi

§ 4.3 Vowel insertion

A Somali syllable can only begin and end with a single consonant. If the root or stem of a word ends in two consonants, an extra supportive vowel must be inserted in the form of the word that lacks an ending. In most cases the inserted vowel is a copy of the vowel already present in the word.⁹

plural	root	singular w	singular with vowel insertion	
xarfó	/xar_f/	xáraf	letter (of the alphabet)	
gacmó	/gac_m/	gacán 10	hand, arm	
jilbó	/jil_b/	jílib	knee	
ilkó	/il_k/	ílig 11	tooth	

⁹ Simlar principles exist in numerous other languages, such as Swedish, where the inserted vowel is normally /e/.

	fingrar fingers	/fing_r/-	finger	finger
	vakna awake (pl.)	/vaːk_n/-	vaken	awake (sg.)
	gamla old (pl.)	/gam_l/-	gammal	old (sg.)
) The	sound change $/m/>/r$	/ also occurs since	e/m/ cannot occu	r word finally See \S 3.

¹⁰ The sound change /m / > /n / also occurs since /m / cannot occur word finally. See § 3.4.2. ¹¹ The sound change /k / > /g / also occurs since /k / cannot occur word finally. See § 3.4.2.

In a small number of words an /i/ is inserted instead.

maalmó	/maal_m/-	maalín	day
xubnó	/xub_n/-	xubín	member; body part

§ 5. Contractions

In Somali, two or even more words often merge into a single word under certain circumstances. Sometimes this only means that the words are written together without being separated by an empty space, but most of the time it also means that some sound is altered or lost.

Some contractions are **obligatory** while others are **optional**.

§ 5.1 Optional contractions

§ 5.1.1 Sentence particle + subject pronoun

In colloquial Somali, sentence particles (i.e. sentence **type** particles and **focus** particles) are usually contracted with the short subject pronouns (except **la** *one*). These contractions also occur in written Somali in a more casual style. Some examples:

wáa aan → wáan	wáxa aan → wáxaan
wáa aad → wáad	wáxa aad → wáxaad
wáa uu → wúu	wáxa uu → <mark>wúxuu</mark>
wáa ay → wáy	wáxa ay → wáxay
baa uu → buu	ayáa uu → ayúu
baa ay → bay	ayáa ay → ayáy
j vie j	ayaa ay 🗕 ayay
maxáa uu → muxúu	ayaa ay 🛹 ayay

§ 5.2 Obligatory contractions

In verb phrases, many types of contractions are obligatory. The indefinite subject pronoun **la** *one*, the object pronouns, the prepositions and the negationen **má** all belong to the type of words that merge with each other.

These contractions are pronounced as one word. Only the very last part is stressed and pronounced with a high tone.

§ 5.2.1 Contracted prepositions

If there is more than one preposition in the same clause, they have to merge with each other. Between vowels /k/ changes to /g/ and between two occurrences of $\mathbf{\hat{u}}$ an extra /g/ is inserted as a "buffer".

ú + ú	> ugú	to to
ú + kú	> ugú	to in/on
ú + ká	> ugá	to from
ú + lá	> ulá	to with
kú + kú	> kagá	in/on in/on
kú + ká	> kagá	in/on from
ká + ká	> kagá	from from
kú + lá	> kulá	in/on with
ká + lá	> kalá	from with

Note that all the three possible combinations of the two prepositions **ku/ka** all result in one and the same contraction: **kagá**.

The is also a contraction **kugú**, but that one consists of the pronoun **ku** *you* and the preposition **kú** *in/on*.

ku you + ú to >	kuú
ku you + kú in/on >	kugú
ku you + ká from >	kaá
ku you + lá with >	kulá

Wáxaan búugga kagá qoray qálin.

FIN.FOC.I the book in with wrote pen I wrote in the book with a PEN.

kú + búugga in the book kú + qálin with a pen

Gaari-daméerkiisa waxa uu kagá shaqeeyaa magaaláda.

his.donkey-cart FIN.FOC he with.from works the.town With his donkey cart he works in the CITY.

kú + gaari-daméerkiisa with his donkey cartká + magaaláda in the city (literally: from the city)

Also note that the form **ugú** has two different meanings.

<mark>ugú < ú + kú:</mark>	<mark>Sideé</mark> baa aad biyáha <mark>gúriga</mark> nadiíf <mark>ugú</mark> kaydsataa?
	In what manner do you keep the water clean in the house?
	<i>= How do you keep the water fresh at home?</i>
<mark>ugú < ú + ú</mark>	Maxaa aynu dabka ugú baahan nahay?
	<i>For what</i> are we in need <i>of the fire</i> ? = What do we need fire for?

§ 5.2.2 Contractions with the pronoun *la*

The indefinite subject pronoun **la** *one* and the prepositions obligatorily merge into one word. The subject pronoun **la** *one* always comes first whereas the preposition **lá** *with* always comes last.

Lägg till la + obj. pronomen i tabellen

la + ú	->	loó	one to	/a/ + /u/ > /oo/
la + kú	->	lagú	one in/on	
la + ká	->	lagá	one from	
la + lá	->	lalá	one with	
ú + lá	->	ulá	to with	
kú + lá	->	kulá	in/on with	
ká + lá	->	kalá	from with	

Meeláhan waxa loó yaqaan iláha biyáha.

these.places FIN.FOC one.as knows the.springs the.water. These places are known as (~are called) water springs.

§ 5.2.3 Contractions with object pronouns

na / ina + ú	> noó / inoó	to us / us to	/a/ + /u/ > /oo/
na / ina + kú	> nagú / inagú	in us / us in	
na / ina + ká	> nagá / inagá	from us / us from	n
na / ina + lá	> nalá / inalá	with us / us with	1

Längre lista/tabell behövs här!

Cuntádu xóog baa ay inoó yeeshaa. the.food strength FOC it us.for makes *Food gives us STRENGTH.*

§ 5.2.4 Contractions with the negation *má*

The negation **má** *not* merges with a preceding preposition, object pronoun and/or the indefininte subject pronoun **la** *one*. The negation always occurs at the very end of such contractions.

Biyáha kamá maaranno. We **don't** manage **without** water.

§ 5.2.5 Longer contractions

Also more than two words are often contracted.

Längre lista/tabell behövs här!

inagagá < ina + kú + ká

Dábka wáxa inagagá baqdá dugáagga.

The wild animals are scared off from us by the fire.

§ 5.2.6 The negation *aan* + short subject pronouns

The negation **aan** is mainly found in subordinate clauses, and it always merges with the short subject pronouns. It may precede or follow the pronoun, and the long vowel of the second word always becomes short.

aan + aan	\rightarrow	aanan		I not	
aan + aad	\rightarrow	$aanad^{\rm N}$	/	aadan ^s	you not
aan + uu	\rightarrow	aanu ^N	/	uusan ^s	he not
aan + ay	\rightarrow	aanay ^N	/	aysan ^s	she not

Example

§ 5.2.7 Contractions with the particles *baa / ayaa*

The focus particles **baa** / **ayaa** obligatorily merge with the two basic interrogative pronouns.

 $\begin{array}{l} \max a \acute{y} \ what + baa / ayaa \rightarrow maxáa \\ ayó \ who + baa / ayaa \rightarrow yáa \end{array}$

The particle **baa** also merges with nouns ending in **-e**/**-o**/**-a**.

Aamíno / Aamína + baa → Aamínaa

§ 6. Nouns

Somali nouns are divided into two groups or grammatical genders: MASCULINE nouns and FEMININE nouns. This is similar to the situation in, e.g., French or Arabic. The gender of a noun is an important key to its grammatical behviour, since Somali nouns can take on many different endings that have differing forms depending on the noun's gender.

The most important endings are the plural endings, the definite article endings as well as the possessive and the demonstrative endings. They correspond to the English definite, possessive and demonstrative determiners, which in English are independent words. Somali also has subject endings (see § 13.1.1) that mark the subject of a clause.

§ 6.1 The gender of nouns

Every Somali noun belongs to one of the two genders: masculine or feminine. For most of the nouns, it is not a biologically motivated division, but a purely grammatical division. For example, the words **xáas** *wife* and **sác** *cow* are grammatically masculine.

```
In most cases, however,
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```
- nouns that denote female creatures are feminine;
```

```
- nouns that denote male creatures are masculine;
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```
– nouns that end in –o, –a or –ad are feminine, e.g.
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```
qaáddo spoon, lába two (items), bisád cat;
```

```
– nouns that end in –e are masculine, e.g. fúre key.
```

For other nouns the written form unfortunately does not reveal the gender. The position of the stress (realised as a high tone) does however, in most nouns, reflect the gender of the word, hence for most nouns it is possible to hear the gender.

§ 6.1.1 Stress in nouns

When discussing the position of the high tone (the realisation of Somali stress), it is important to understand that long vowels consist of two vowel positions, whereas a short vowel only consists of one vowel position. This is straight-forwardly reflected by the Somali spelling.

The vast majority of masculine nouns have the high tone on the second last vowel position, while the vast majority of feminine nouns have their high tone on the last vowel position. Exceptions are mainly the nouns ending in **-e/-o/-a** in the singular (see § 6.1.3).

Among nouns having a short final vowel, feminine words therefore have their high tone on the last syllable, whereas masculine nouns have the high tone on the second last syllable.

MASC.		FEM.	
ínan	boy	inán	girl
kúrsi	chair	bisád	cat
áqal	house	gabádh	girl

In nouns that have a long vowel in the final syllable, both masculine and feminine words have their high tone on that final syllable, but in different ways. The reason for that is that only one of the two vowel positions in the long vowel is pronounced with higher tone than the rest of the word.

In masculine nouns, the first part of the long vowel carries the high tone, and then the tone falls through the long vowel up until the end of the word.

In feminine nouns only the last part of the long vowel carries the high tone, resulting in a rising tone through the long vowel until the tone reaches it peak at the end of the word.

MASC.		FEM.	
géed	tree, plant	beér	garden, field, farm
dukáan	shop	khudaár	vegetables and fruit
míis	table	liín	citric fruit(s)

In words with only one short vowel, it is however impossible to hear the gender. You simply have to memorise it.

MASC.		FEM.	
nál	lamp, electric light	káb	shoe

§ 6.1.2 Nouns in *-e/-o/-a*

The nouns that in the singular end in **-o/-a** (feminines) or **-e** (masculines) follow different rules. When these words are pronounced in isolation, without any context, they are most often pronounced with the high tone on the second last vowel position. However, if the word is part of a phrase or a sentence, it is most often pronounced with the high tone on the last vowel position.

magaálo town, city magaaló yar a small town

§ 6.1.3 Exceptions

There are a few exceptions to the principles for the placement of tone described above.

A small number of masculine nouns have the high tone on the final vowel position. Such nouns often end in /aa/, /i/ or /r/.

dilaá murderer, qoraá writer, and other agent nouns in –aá, abtí maternal uncle, maroodí elephant, ratí pack camel, webí river, adeér paternal uncle, dhakhtár doctor; clinic, reér family, afhayeén spokesperson, haweén women, albaáb door, xafiís office

Among feminine nouns, especially women's names that do not end in **–o** or **–a** usually have their high tone on the second last vowel position.

Lúul, Máryan

The names of many cities as well as countries ending in **–(i)ya** have their high tone on the fourth vowel position counting from the end.

Áfgooye a city close to Mogadishu, **Gároowe** the capital of Puntland **Itóobiya** *Etiopien*, **Kéenya** *Kenya*, **Soomáaliya** *Somalia*

§ 6.2 The Indefinite Form of Nouns

Somali doesn't have any indefinite article, just an indefinite form of nouns. Words like **kúrsi** or **bisád** can therefore be translated either as *chair*, *cat* or *a chair*, *a cat*, whichever is more suitable in the English context.

§ 6.3 The Definite Singular of Nouns

The Somali definite article is not a word, it is an ending.

–ka for masculine nouns:	más (a) snake	máska the snake
-ta for feminine nouns:	káb (a) shoe	kábta the shoe

The initial consonant of the definite article suffix changes its shape according to the immediately preceding sound (see § 4.1).

After the sounds /g, aa, i, y, w/ the masculine article becomes **–ga**.

gúri (*a*) house **gúriga** the house

After /e, o/ the masculine article becomes **–ha**. At the same time /e, o/ are replaced by /a/. The high tone is on this /a/.

aábbe (a) father aabbáha the father

After /c, h, x, kh, q, '/ the masculine article becomes just **–a**.

libáax (a) lion libáaxa the lion

After /d, i, y, w, c, h, x, kh, q, '/ the feminine article becomes **–da**.

mindí (a) knife **mindída** the knife

Also after /o/ the feminine article becomes –da and the /o/ changes to /a/.

magaálo (a) city magaaláda the city

After /dh/ the feminine article becomes just -a in writing, but /dh/ is pronounced more intensely.

gabádh (a) girl gabádha the girl

After /l/ the feminine article becomes **-sha**, and the /l/ disappears.

bíl (*a*) month/crescent **bísha** the month/crescent

The high tone is generally not affected by the addition of the definite article suffix.

macállin (*a*) teacher macállinka the teacher macallimád (*a*) teacher macallimádda the teacher

Only in words that end in /e, o, a/, the high tone is "shifted" to the final vowel position before the definite article suffix. At the same time, both /o/ and /e/ also change to /a/.

fúre (a) key	furáha the key
sheéko (a) story	sheekáda the story

In a handful of nouns, a stem final glottal stop disappears before the definite article.

gu' (a) key	gúga the key
ri' (a) goat	rída the goat

but

go' (a) piece of cloth **gó'a** the piece of cloth, sheet

§ 6.3.1 Nouns with gender variation

A small number of nouns are used with different gender by different persons and/or in different parts of the Somali speaking area. A couple of common words with noticeable variation are

roótiga / rootída / roodhída	the bread
Sábtiga / Sabtída	the Saturday
súbaxa / subáx <mark>da</mark>	the morning

§ 6.3.2 Generic definite form

Generic use of a noun means that the noun is used in a generalising way with reference to the whole category of such objects, not with reference to any specific, existing object(s). In English the definite singular form is sometimes used this way, e.g. *Why does <u>the spider have eight legs?</u>* It is as if we treated one spider as a prototype for all the spiders in the world. This is very common in Somali.

Díinku waxa uu léeyahay lugó gaagaaban. The turtle has short legs.

For countable nouns in English, the generic use of **definite** singular is synonymous with a generic use of **indefinite** plural. You can also say *Why do* <u>spiders</u> have eight legs? In Somali, however, the **definite** form is preferred in the generic sense, also in the plural.

Shimbirúhu ukún ayéy dhalaan. Birds lay eggs.

For uncountable mass nouns, English doesn't differentiate between specific and generic meaning, e.g. *I bought milk* vs. *I love milk*, whereas French does, e.g. *J'ai acheté <u>du lait</u>* vs. *J'aime <u>le lait</u>*. Somali, just like French and Arabic, also prefers the definite form in the general meaning, i.e. when not referring to any specific object, but to the whole category.

Wáxa uu jecél yahay liínta. *He is fond of citric fruit.* **ytterligare ex. från byggnation**

§ 6.4 The Indefinite Plural of Nouns

There are four ways to create the plural of Somali nouns.

1. FEMININE nouns with a singular in **–o** have a plural that ends in **–oóyin**.

hoóy <mark>o</mark>	mother	hooy <mark>oóyin</mark>	mothers
magaálo	city	magaal <mark>oóyin</mark>	cities

2. MASCULINE nouns with a singular in -e have a plural that ends in -ayaál.

aábbe	father	aabbayaál	fathers

3. MASCULINE nouns with only one syllable in the singular usually form their plural by reduplication. First the vowel -á is added and then the final consonant of the singular form is repeated.

más	snake	masás	snakes
wíil	boy, son	wiilál	boys, sons

4. All other nouns have a plural that ends in **–ó**.

úl (f.)	stick	uló	sticks
baabúur (m.)	car	baabuurró	cars

Often, however, different sound changes occur before this ending.

§ 6.4.1 More about feminine plural forms in $-\phi$

Feminine nouns that don't end in **–o** in the singular simply add **–ó** to make the word plural.

sariír	bed	pl. sari i	iró beds
káb	shoe	pl. kab	ó shoes
bisád	cat	pl. bisa	dó cats

If the stem ends in –i then a –y– is inserted before the plural ending –ó.

mindí	knife	pl. mindiyó	knives
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§ 6.4.2 More about masculine plural forms in $-\acute{0}$

Masculine nouns that do not end in -e in the singular and contain more than one syllable take the ending $-\acute{0}$ in the plural.

Before the ending $-\acute{0}$, the consonants /b/, /d/, /r/, /l/, /n/, and /m/ are normally doubled, but not /g/.

saaxíib	friend	pl. saaxiibbó
baabúur	car	pl. baabuurró
xayawáan	animal	pl. xayawaannó
tártan	competition	pl. tartammó

After other sounds, which are not doubled, the consonant /y/ is added before the plural ending.

dálag	crop	pl.	dalag <mark>yó</mark>
mágac	name	pl.	magac <mark>yó</mark>
libáax	lion	pl.	libaax <mark>yó</mark>
webí	river	pl.	webi <mark>yó</mark>

The same holds for compounds that end in /d/ and several foreing borrowings.

falkaab-meeléed	adverbial of place	pl.	falkaab-meeleedyó
insaym	enzym	pl.	insaym <mark>yó</mark>

If the stem already ends in /y/, only $-\acute{o}$ is added.

éray word pl. erayó

§ 6.4.3 Complicated Plural Forms of Nouns

(a) Some words have a stem that ends in two consonants. Since a Somali word cannot end in two consonants, an additional vowel has to be inserted in the singular form. It is almost always a copy of the vowel that is already present in the stem of the word.

sg. /xar_f/	>	xáraf (m.)	<i>letter (of the alphabet)</i>
pl. /xar_f/-/o/	>	xarfó	letters

(b) A few words have a stem ending in a consonant + /y/. In those words the singular instead ends in the vowel /i/.

sg.	/gur_y/	>	gúri (m.)	house
pl.	/gur_y/-/o/	>	guryó	houses

(c) If the stem ends in /m/ or /k/, this fact is not evident from the singular form. These sounds may only occur if they are followed by a vowel. The word's stem is only evident in the plural, since the alternations /m/ > /n/ and /k/ > /g/ must occur word finally.

U	/weydiim/	>	weydiín (f.)	question
	/weydiim/-/o/	>	weydiimó	questions
U	/tim/	>	tín (f.)	a stand of hair
	/tim/-/o/	>	timó	(strands of) hair
U	/nim/	>	nín (m.)	man
	/nim/-/am/	>	nimán	men

(d) In some words vowel insertion and consonant alternation occur at the same time.

sg.	/gac_m/	>	gacán (f.)	arm, hand
pl.	/gac_m/-/o/	>	gacmó	arms, hands
sg.	/il_k/	>	ílig (m.)	tooth
pl.	/il_k/-/o/	>	ilkó	teeth

In a few words the inserted vowel is not a copy of the vowel already present in the stem.

sg.	/maal_m/	>	maalín (f.)	day
pl.	/maal_m/-/o/	>	maalmó	days

§ 6.5 The Definite Plural of Nouns

The plural definite form depends on the gender of the noun and the final sound of the word. For masculine nouns also the length of the word plays a crucial role.

§ 6.5.1 The definite plural of feminine nouns

In the plural, feminine nouns take the definite article **–ka**, **–ha**.

If the indefinite plural ends in **–oóyin** the definite article is **–ka**.

hoóy <mark>o</mark>	hooy <mark>áda</mark>	hooy <mark>oóyin</mark>	hooyoóyinka	the mothers
magaál	o magaal <mark>áda</mark>	magaaloóyin	n magaaloóyinka	the cities
tíro	tiráda	tiroóyin	tiroóyinka	the numbers

If the indefinite plural ends in –ó, the definite form will end in –áha.

káb	kábta	kabó	kab <u>áha</u>	the shoes
bisád	bisád <mark>da</mark>	bisadó	bisadáha	the cats
meél	meé <mark>sha</mark>	meeló	meel <mark>áha</mark>	the places
íl	ísha	indhó	indháha	the eyes

§ 6.5.2 The definite plural of masculine nouns

(a) Masculine nouns with **two syllables** in the indefinite plural form have a definite form ending with **-ka**, **-ga**, **-ha**, **-a**.

(b) The major part of this type of nouns consists of monosyllabic masculine nouns that form their plural by reduplication. They have the same definite article both in the singular and in the plural.

qóys	qóys <mark>ka</mark>	qoysás	qoysás <mark>ka</mark>	the families
áf	áf <mark>ka</mark>	afáf	afáf <mark>ka</mark>	the mouths, languages
sán	sánka	sanán	sanán <mark>ka</mark>	the noses
míis	míis <mark>ka</mark>	miisás	miisás <mark>ka</mark>	the tables
bás	bás <mark>ka</mark>	basás	basás <mark>ka</mark>	the buses

(c) A small number of other masculine nouns have a plural form in –ó with just two syllables. Their definite form ends in –áha.

géed	géed <mark>ka</mark>	geedó	geed <mark>áha</mark>	the trees, the plants
gúri	gúri <mark>ga</mark>	guryó	gury <mark>áha</mark>	the houses
ílig	ílig <mark>ga</mark>	ilkó	ilkáha	the teeth
xáraf	xáraf <mark>ka</mark>	xarfó	xarfáha	the letters

(d) Masculine nouns with **more than two syllables** in the indefinite plural form take the definite article **–ta**, **–da**, **–sha**.

(e) Masculine nouns with an indefinite plural in **–ayaál** have a definite plural form ending in **–ayaásha**.

aább <mark>e</mark>	aabb <mark>áha</mark>	aabbayaál	aabbayaásha	the fathers
fúre	furáha	furayaál	furayaásha	the keys

(f) All other regular masculine nouns have a definite plural form ending in –áda. The majority of masculine nouns belong to this type.

xayawáan	xayawáan <mark>ka</mark>	xayawaannó	xayawaannáda	the animals
baabúur	baabúur <mark>ka</mark>	baabuur <mark>ró</mark>	baabuurráda	the cars

§ 6.6 Irregular Nouns

(a) All masculine nouns that form their plural through reduplication of the consonant /l/ and whose stem contain a **long vowel** have a definite plural form in **–ásha**.

wiil-ka boy pl. wiilál wiilásha

(b) A small number of monosyllabic masculine nouns with a **long vowel** do not form their plural through reduplication, but with the ending **–ó**.

géed –ka	tree, plant	pl.	geedó	geedáha
reér –ka	family	pl.	reeró	reeráha

sí –da	manner	pl. siyaabó	siyaabáha
		or siyaaló	siyaaláha
wáx –a	thing	pl. waxyaabó	waxyaabáha
		or waxyaaló	waxyaaláha

(d) A few nouns do not form the plural according to the general rules for their gender. Instead, the plural form is based on the rules for the opposite gender.

walaál –ka brother	
walaál, walaá <mark>sh</mark> a sister	pl. walaaló siblings walaaláha
sánnad –ka year	
(sannad – <mark>da</mark>)	pl. sannadó sannadáha

Alongside **sánnad**, there is also a parallel form **sáno**, **sanáda**, pl. **sanoóyin –ka**, which is feminine and completely regular.

(subax –a)	morning	pl.	subaxyó	subaxyáda
subáx – <mark>da</mark>			(subx <mark>ó</mark>)	(subxáha)

(e) A small group of nouns have an irregular plural form alongside the regular form.

abtí –ga	maternal uncle	pl.	abtiyó, abtiyáda
			abtiyáal, abtiyaásha

In a few instances there is a difference in meaning.

íl, ísha	eye; spring, source	pl.	indhó, indháha eyes
			iló, iláha springs, sources

(c) A couple of words take the uncommon plural endings –yaabó / –yaaló.

§ 6.7 Arabic Plural Forms

In Arabic it is common to form the plural through vowel alternation in the stem of the word. Some such forms are used also in Somali. The definite article is then **-ta** or **-da**.

```
    saaxíib, saaxíibka the friend
    Arabic pl. asxaáb, asxaábta the friends
    regular pl. saaxiibbó, saaxiibbáda the friends
    kúrsi, kúrsiga the chair
    Arabic pl. kuraás, kuraásta the chairs
    regular pl. kursiyó, kursiyáda the chairs
```

This Arabic pattern has sometimes also spread to borrowings from other languages.

búug, búugga the bookArabic pl. buugaág, buugaágta the booksregular pl. (rare) buugág, buugágga the books

§ 6.8 The Counting Form of Nouns

After numbers larger than **hál** *one*, Somali nouns are not used in their plural form, but in a special **counting form**. Only feminine nouns with the plural ending **–ó** have a separate counting form that ends in **–ood**. For all other nouns the counting form is equal to the singular form.

MASCULINE		Feminine	
búug	book	bisád	cat
buugaág	books	bisadó	cats
hál buug	one book	hál bisad	one cat
labá buug	two books	labá bisad <mark>ood</mark>	two cats
baabúur	car	hoóyo	mother
baabuurró	cars	hooyoóyin	mothers
hál baabuur	one car	hál hooyo	one mother
labá baabuur	two cars	labá hooyo	two mothers

The counting form is also used after certain other words that express quantity, e.g. **ímmisa** *how many*, **dhowr** *a few*.

Examples

The numeral and the following noun constitute a noun phrase, and the end of a noun phrase is often marked by a non-obligatory high tone.

labá hooyó	or	labá hooyo	two mothers
labá bisadoód	or	labá bisadood	two cats

No other endings can be added after -ood of the counting form. Other endings must be added to the numeral which is the head noun of the phrase.

labádayda bisadoodmy two catslabádaas bisadoodthose two cats

For more details about noun phrases with numerals, see § 12.1.8 and § 12.1.9.

§ 6.9 Countability

Some English nouns are very rarely used in the plural, e.g. *childhood, flour, Andrew, London*. Also in Somali there are many such words. There are also many words that are completely impossible to put in the plural.

Lägg till ett stycke om massord.

§ 6.9.1 General use of the singular

Some objects, such as *garlic*, are easily countable, but they are hardly used in the plural anyway. The singular form doesn't really say anything about the amount in question. This principle is applied to many more nouns in Somali, especially in the category of fruit and vegetables, e.g. **móos**^s/ **múus**^N *banana*(*s*), **liín** *citric fruit*(*s*), but also, e.g., **kallúun / malláay**^s *fish*. It is extremely unusual to put such words in the plural.

§ 6.9.2 Collective nouns

The typical trait of a collective noun is that the word form carries no plural ending. The singular form refers to several persons or objects. English collective nouns are e.g. *police, staff, cattle*. There is often a variation between the singular and plural form of verbs used with such nouns, e.g. *The staff is/are very efficient*.

Somali has a very large number of collective nouns.

carruúr –ta	children	dúmar –ka	women
rág –ga	men	lo' –da	dairy cattle
ádhi ^N / ári ^S –ga	goats and sheep	digáag –ga	chicken

Collective nouns cannot be used when referring to only one single person, animal or object.

§ 6.9.3 Nouns with singular, plural & collective form

A number of Somali masculine nouns have a feminine collective form alongside the regular plural form.

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
MASC.	baab <mark>ú</mark> ur, ba	aabúur <mark>ka</mark>	baabuurrć	ó, baabuurrá <mark>da</mark>
	car	the car	cars	the cars
	búug, bi	úug <mark>ga</mark>	buugaág,	buugaág <mark>ta</mark>
	book	the book	(buugág,	buugág <mark>ga</mark>)
	COLLECTIVE		books	the books
FEM.	baabuúr, ba	aabuúr <mark>ta</mark>		
	cars	the cars		
	buúg, bu	uúgta		
	books	books		

There are also a few cases where a singular form is derived from the collective form with a suffix.

	COLLECTIVE	
MASC.	digáag, digáagga	
	chicken, hens	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
FEM.	digaag <mark>ád</mark> , digaagádda	digaagadó, digaagadáha
	hen	hens

§ 6.9.4 Nouns with only singular & collective form

Some nouns don't have any plural form, only a masculine singular form and a feminine collective form.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
MASC.	. Soomaáli, Soomaáliga the Somali	_
	árday, árdayga the pupil	_
	askári, askáriga the soldier	_
	COLLECTIVE	
FEM.	Soomaalí, Soomaalída the Somalis	
	ardaý, ardaýda the pupils	
	or ardó, ardáda the pupils	
	askár, askárta the soldiers	

There are also a few cases where a singular form is derived from the collective form with a suffix.

	COLLECTIVE	
MASC.	haweén, haweénka the women	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
FEM.	haweéney, haweéneyda the woman	_

§ 6.9.5 Group nouns

There are also collective nouns that denote a group of objects, e.g. *family*. These groups are however countable and can be put in the plural in the ordinary way.

sg. coll.	qóys	a family
pl. coll.	qoysás	families
11	/ 1	
sg. coll.	géel	a herd of camels

§ 6.9.6 Plural Only Nouns

(a) Two Somali nouns denoting substances only have a plural form. English nouns of this type are *leftovers* and *oats*.

biyó	water	biy <mark>áha</mark>	the water
caanó	milk	caan <mark>áha</mark>	the milk

These nouns are plural (not feminine singular) since

– the high tone is on the plural ending $-\acute{0}$,

– the definite form ends in –áha,

– the verb is in the plural when these nouns serve as the subject.

(b) The plural forms habló *girls*, idó *sheep* and xooló *cattle* also lack a corresponding singular form, but as expected they do denote several living beings. The exceptional thing about them is that if you want to say something about a single individual, you have to choose another, synonymous word, e.g. gabádh / gabár or inán for *girl* and sác *cow* or díbi *bull, ox* etc.

§ 7. Formation of Nouns

Somali nouns are formed in similar ways as English nouns. There are both compounds and words which are formed by adding different endings.

wada together + jír body	> wadajír (m.) unity, solidarity
beeró <i>fields</i> + –le , –ley	> beeraále (m.) farmer
	beeraléy (f. coll.) <i>farmers</i>

§ 7.1 Persons

The ending **–e** is used to form many words that denote a person who carries out a certain task.

baraa	teaches	báre	(m.) <i>teacher</i>
beér field	, falaa cultivates	beerfál <mark>e</mark>	(m.) <i>farmer</i>

Other, less common endings with the same meaning are **–aá** and **–áal**.

qoraa writes	qóre / qoraá (m.) <i>writer, author</i>
reér family, guuraa moves	reer-guuraá (m. coll.) <i>nomads</i>
tumaa beats, pounds	tumáal (m.) blacksmith

The ending **–le** denotes an owner or somebody who has a job related to an object. A vowel immediately before the suffix **-le** usually becomes long.

dukáan	shop	dukaánle (m.) <i>shopkeeper, shop assistant</i>
tágsi	taxi	tagsiíle (m.) <i>taxi driver</i>

The same ending sometimes denotes a person with some kind of problem.

indhoóle a blind	person
	indhoóle a blind

§ 7.1.1 Female persons

The ending $-\hat{a}d$ is commonly used to form feminine nouns denoting a person.

MASCULINE	FEMININE	
macállin	macallimád	teacher
árday	ardayád	student, pupil

The feminine **–ley** corresponds to the masculine **–le**.

dawaárle *tailor* **dawaárley** *seamstress* < **dawaar** *sewing machine* Sometimes **–to** corresponds to the masculine **–e**, whereas **–so** corresponds to **–ye**.

MASCULINE	FEMININE		
adeége	adeégto	servant	< adéeg service
kalkaalíye	kalkaalíso	nurse	
karíye	karíso	cook	< kariyaa cooks

§7.1.2 Collectives

The two feminine endings **–ley** and **–to/–so** are also used to form collective nouns.

MASC. SG.	FEM. COLL.
beeraále farmer	beeraléy farmers
kalluumaýste fisherman	kalluumaysáto fishermen

§ 7.2 Things and abstract notions

The suffix **–e** is used to form certain words denoting tools.

furaa	opens	fúre –ha	key

The suffix **–o** is used to form various kinds of nouns.

sheegaa says, tells	sheéko –da	story
----------------------------	------------	-------

The suffix -áal is used to form nouns denoting the result of an action.

```
qoraa writes qoráal – ka text, writing
```

The suffix –i is sometimes used to form abstract nouns.

baahán needing	baahí -da	need
kalsoón trusting	kalsooní -da	trust, confidence

Just like the English word *smile* may be both a verb and a noun, Somali also has many pairs of a verb and a noun where it is not clear which word is derived from the other. Both consist of only a root and grammatical endings.

béer!plant!, cultivate!beéra field, a plantationbeer-aaplants, cultivatesbeér-tathe field, the plantation

§ 7.3 Verbal Nouns

In English, nouns are most commonly formed from verbs with the ending *—ing*, but some other less frequent endings also occur, e.g. *—ment: move, movement*.

The most common endings serving to derive nouns from verbs are:

-íd (or sometimes –ís) if the imperative (see § 11.9) ends in a consonant, qoraa writes, qór! write!, qoríd -da (f.), qorís -ta (f.) (the) writing

-n (or sometimes –s) if the imperative ends in –i, akhriyaa reads, ákhri! read!, akhrín -ta (f.), ákhris -ka (m.) (the) reading

-n if the imperative ends in -ee (which changes into -ay- / -ey-), sameeyaa makes, samée! make!, samaýn/sameýn -ta (f.) (the) making

-**sho** if the imperative ends in -**o** (which changes into -**a**-).

booqdaa visits, **booqó!** visit!, **booqásho** -da (f.) (*the*) visit(*ing*) **bartaa** *learns*, **baró!** *learn!*, **barásho** -da (f.) (*the*) *learning* Some other, less frequent endings are, e.g.

–itaan

Somali verbal nouns are often used like English *to* + infinitive.

Sáhra waa ay jecéshahay ákhriska. Sahra likes reading/to read.

Some verbal nouns have developed special meanings and usages.

horreeyaa is up front, comes first	ugú horreýntii first of all
weydiiyaa asks	weydiin -ta question

§7.4 Compounds

There are several different types of compound nouns. The common trait is that a compound noun only has one high tone (one stress) and only one definite article at the end of the whole compound.

bád wéyn a big sea	badwéyn an ocean
bádda wéyn the big sea	badwéynta the ocean

Many are formed just by joning two roots, as in the example above. Others are formed with the addition of a suffix, often **–éed** or **-e**.

éray word, su'aál question	eraysu'aaléed question word
mádax head, chief, wéyn big	madaxweýne president

Some are formed in more complex ways.

```
mágac noun, ú for, yaal stands magacuyáal pronoun
```

Notice that verbal nouns are often compounds consisting of e.g. a verb and its object, and that such compounds only have one high tone (stress).

sigáar cigarette + cabbíd drinking sigaarcabbíd smoking

If prepositions or other preverbal particles precede a verbal noun, they become prefixes, hence part of the noun, and loose the high tone (stress) that they have before a verb form.

Examples: ku-xigeen, ku-soo-xxxx

In today's written Somali, compounds exhibit a lot of spelling variation. Traditionally, joint writing has been recommended, but today separate writing has become very common. Sometimes a hyphen is also used.

eraysu'aaleed / eray su'aaleed / eray-su'aaleed question word magacuyáal / magac u yaal / magac-u-yaal / magac uyaal pronoun

Numerals § 8.

(a) In Somali, numerals are not a separate word class. They are simply nouns, just like *pair*, *trio* or *dozen* are nouns in English. When an ending is added to a phrase beginning with a numeral, the ending is added to the numeral, not to the following noun (see also § 12.1.8). The noun after the numeral is in the counting form (see § 6.7). The counting form does not permit the addition of any further endings.

labá wiil	two boys	sáddex bil <u>ood</u>	three months
labá <mark>da</mark> wiil	the two boys	sáddex <mark>daas</mark> bil <u>ood</u>	those three months

(b) The Somali numbers 2–8 are feminine nouns, whereas all higher numbers are masculine. Ków (1) is feminine, whereas hál (1) and éber (0) are masculine. The numbers 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 100 have a high tone that is exceptional with respect to the gender of the word.

0	éber (m.)			
1	ków (f.) / hál (m.)	10	tobán (m.)	
2	lábo / lába (f.)	20	lab <u>aá</u> tan (m.)	(–tan < toban)
3	sáddex (f.)	30	sóddon (m.)	
4	áfar (f.)	40	afártan (m.)	
5	shán (f.)	50	kónton (m.)	
6	líx (f.)	60	líxdan (m.)	
7	toddóbo / toddóba (f.)	70	toddob <u>aá</u> tan (m.)	
8	siddéed (f.)	80	siddeétan (m.)	
9	sagaál (m.)	90	sagaáshan (m.)	<u>/l+t/>/sh/</u>
		100	boqól (m.)	
		200	labá boqol	
		300	sáddex boqol	
		1000) kún	
		4000) áfar kun	
		1000	0000 milyan (or ma	alyuun)

(c) In complex numbers, **ków** is always used. It is also used when simply counting *one, two, three, four*...

kow iyo toban	eleven
toban iyo kow buug	eleven books
ków, lábo, sáddex, áfar	one, two, three, four

Hál is used when reading a sequence of figures, such as a phone number, and also preceding a noun in order to say that there is one item of some kind. It can also be used independently, not mentioning the intended object.

sáddex, hál, áfar, siddéed	<i>three, one, four, eight</i> (e.g. a PIN code)
hál buug	one book
hál i síi	give me one

§ 9. Pronouns

Somali has fewer genuine pronouns than English. Nouns dominate in Somali and they are also used as the equivalents of many English pronouns or pronominal adverbs. In such pronominal functions, these nouns are often used with demonstrative endings such as **-kan / -tan** *this*, **-kaa(s) / -taa(s)** *that* (see § 9.3), the interrogative endings **-keé / -teé? / -má?** *which?* (see § 9.5), or the negative particles **-ná** or **-bá**.

NOUN	PRONOMINAL USE
qóf person	qóf somebody, someone
	qofná nobody
	qofkeé? who?
cíd people	cíd somebody, some people
	cidná nobody
wáx thing	wáx something
	waxná, waxbá nothing
sí manner	sídan like this, this way, (in) this manner
	sídaa(s) like that, that way, (in) that manner
	sideé? how?, what way, (in) what manner
meél place	meél somewhere
	meelná nowhere
hál place	hálkan here, (in, to) this place
	hálkaa(s) there, (in, to) that place
	halkeé? where?, (in, to) which place?
xág side, direction	xaggeé? where?
kól moment	kólkaa(s) then, (in) that moment
már moment	márkaa(s) then, (in) that moment
wákhti/wáqti tim	e waqtigeé? / wakhtigeé? when?, (at) what time?
goór moment	goormá? when?, (at) what time?

and many more... ge fler exempel

§ 9.1 Personal Pronouns

	SHORT SUBJECT FORMS		SHORT OBJECT FORMS		
1 p. sing.	aan		Ι	i	me
2 p. sing.	aad		уои	ku	уои
3 p. sing. m.	uu		he, it	_	him, it
3 p. sing. f.	ay		she, it	-	her, it
1 p. plur.excl.	aan / aan	nu	we	na	US
1 p. plur.incl.	aynu / aa	n	we	ina	us
2 p. plur.	aad / ayd	lin	уои	idin	уои
3 p. plur.	ay		they	-	them
	LONG FOR	RMS			
1 p. sing.	aníga	I, m	e		
2 p. sing.	adíga	уои			
3 p. sing. masc.	isága he, him (it)		him (it)		
3 p. sing. fem.	iyáda she, her (it)				

§ 9.1.1 No 3rd Person Object Pronouns

annága

innága

idínka

iyága

уои

they, them

1 p. plur.excl.

1 p. plur.incl.

2 p. plur.

3 p. plur.

In Somali there are no object pronouns in the 3rd person corresponding to *him, her, it, them*. If a verb normally takes an object and there isn't any word in the clause expressing such an object, then the object has to be inferred from the preceding context and an object pronoun has to be added when translating into English.

we, us (excluding you)

we, us (including you)

Waan síraynaa. We will deceive them/her/him. Aabbihiís wúxuu siiyey shán shilin. His father gave him five shillings. This also applies if there is a preposition in the clause, but no noun for that preposition to refer to.

Waxay ku tiri, "Ma kartid." She said to him: – You can't do it. Immisa shilin baa u soo hartay? How many shillings remained for her/him/them? Lo'du waa xayawaan waxtar leh. Maxaa aynu ka helnaa? Cows are useful animals. What do we get from them?

§ 9.1.2 Long Forms of Personal Pronouns

Alongside the short personal pronouns there are also longer forms which function as nouns. They contain the definite article, and they are used for additional clarity or emphasis. Since these forms behave like any other noun they also take the subject ending **-u** when they denote the subject of the clause.

<mark>Example</mark>

The long personal pronouns are mostly used to refer to people. The third person long pronouns may also be used to refer to animals, but quite seldom to inanimate objects or abstract nouns. In those instances demonstrative pronouns are preferred instead of personal pronouns.

Example

§ 9.1.3 First Person Plural: *we, us, our*

In Somali it is possible to make a distinction between two different meanings of the pronouns *we*, *us*, *our*. Especially in a higher stylistic register, standard Somali has including and excluding forms of these pronouns, depending on whether one wants to include or exclude the person(s) spoken to.

In colloquial Somali, however, most speakers don't make this distinction, and one form has been generalised in both functions.

An example of the distinction might be when some parents tell their children that *We are going to a party on Saturday*. This might mean that the children have to stay at home (excluding them from the *we*) or that they can also come (including them in the *we*). In standard Somali it is possible to express this distinction through the choice of pronoun.

	INCLUDING	EXCLUDING
Long personal pronoun	innága	annága
Short subject pronoun	aynu	aannu
Short object pronoun	ina	na
Short object pronoun + $\acute{\mathbf{u}}$	inoó	noó
Possessive pronoun	kéenna, téenna	kaayága, taayáda

§ 9.1.4 The Indefinite Subject Pronoun *la*

Like many other languages Somali has an indefinite subject pronoun: **la**. It is equivalent to French *on* and German *man*, and it often corresponds to *one* or *you* or *they* in English. It is used more frequently in Somali than in the other languages since Somali doesn't have a passive construction.

Albaábka waxa lagú sameeyay lóox.

They have made the door with wood. *The door has been made of wood.* or *The door is made of wood.*

§ 9.1.5 Obligatory short object pronouns

The short object pronouns in the 1st and 2nd person must always be used, even if a long pronoun is also used for clarity or emphasis.

Adíga yáa ku ilaaliya?

you who.FOC you.OBJ watches.out
WHO takes care of you? (contrastive emphasis on you)

§ 9.1.6 The reflexive object pronoun *is*

The pronoun **is** corresponds to both *oneself* and *each other*, i.e. it has both a reflexive and a reciprocal meaning.

Xáaskii Díinku wáy is qarisay.
The Turtle's wife hid herself.
Sahró iyo Áxmed wáa ay is eegeen.
Sahra and Ahmed looked at each other.
Way islá hádlayaan.
They are talking with each other.

It is used in the 1st and 2nd person just as well as in the 3rd person.

Wáa aan <mark>is</mark> qariyay.	I hid myself.
Wáa aad <mark>is</mark> qarisay.	You hid yourself.
Wáa uu <mark>is</mark> qariyay.	He hid himself.
Wáa ay <mark>is</mark> qarisay.	She hid herself.
Wáa aan is qarinnay.	We hid ourselves.
Wáa aad <mark>is</mark> qariseen.	You hid yourselves.
Wáa ay <mark>is</mark> qariyeen.	They hid themselves.

§ 9.2 Demonstrative pronouns

The independent demonstrative pronouns have two different gender forms in the singular and one common form in the plural.

	MASC.SING.	FEM.SING	PLURAL	
this	kán	tán	kúwan	these
that	kaás	taás	kúwaas	those
that one, you know	kií	tií	kúw <mark>ii</mark>	those, you know

The singular forms of these pronouns are also added as endings to nouns, both in the singular and in the plural. The initial consonant of the demonstrative ending is always identical to the consonant of the definite article. See § 4.1 and § 6.3.

káb	mindí	(a) shoe, knife
kábta	mindída	the shoe, knife
kábtan	mindídan	this shoe, knife
kábtaas	mindídaas	that sjhoe, knife
káb <mark>tii</mark>	mindídii	that shoe, knife, you know
kabó	mindiyó	shoes, knives
kabáha	mindiyáha	the shoes, knives
kabáhan	mindiyáhan	these shoes, knives
kabáhaas	mindiyáhaas	those shoes, knives
kabíhii 12	mindiyíhii	those shoes, knives, you know
bás	gúri	(a) bus, house
bás bás <mark>ka</mark>	gúri gúriga	(a) bus, house the bus, house
	0	
báska	gúriga	the bus, house
báska báskan	gúriga gúrigan	the bus, house this bus, house
báska báskan báskaas	gúriga gúrigan gúrigaas	the bus, house this bus, house that bus, house
báska báskan báskaas báskii	gúriga gúrigan gúrigaas gúrigii	the bus, house this bus, house that bus, house that bus, house, you know
báska báskan báskaas báskii basás	gúriga gúrigan gúrigaas gúrigii guryó	the bus, house this bus, house that bus, house that bus, house, you know buses, houses
báska báskan báskaas báskii basás basás	gúriga gúrigan gúrigaas gúrigii guryó guryáha	the bus, house this bus, house that bus, house that bus, house, you know buses, houses the buses, houses
báska báskan báskaas báskii basás basás basáska basáskan	gúriga gúrigan gúrigaas gúrigii guryó guryáha guryáhan	the bus, house this bus, house that bus, house that bus, house, you know buses, houses the buses, houses these buses, houses

§ 9.2.1 Demonstrative Forms in *–aan, –aa*

When referring to objects close by, a variation is at hand between more neutral forms ending in **–an** and marked southern forms in **–aan**.

kábtan / kábtaan^s mindídan / mindídaan^s this shoe, knife kabáhan / kabáhaan^s mindiyáhan / mindiyáhaan^s these shoes, knives

 $^{^{12}}$ /i/ in the suffix spreads across /h/ so that a preceding /a/ becomes assimilated. See § 4.2.1.

básan / báskaan^sgúrigan / gúrigaan^sthis bus, housebasáskan / basáskaan^s guryáhan / guryáhaan^sthese buses, houses

When referring to objects further away, a variation is at hand between more netural forms in **–aas** and more casual, everyday forms in **–aa**.

kábtaas (kábtaa)	mindídaas (mindídaa)	that shoe, knife
kabáhaas (kabáhaa)	mindiyáhaas (mindiyáhaa) those shoes, knives
bás <mark>kaas</mark> (bás <mark>kaa</mark>)	gúrigaas (gúrigaa)	that bus, house
basás <mark>kaas</mark> (basás <mark>kaa</mark>)	guryáhaas (guryáhaa)	those buses, houses

§ 9.2.2 Demonstrative Forms in –*ii*

The suffix **-ii** is used in several different contexts.

Adjectives following this form need to be followed by the past tense ending of the verb **yahay** *is*. See § 12.1.13.

Examples

(a) The basic function is to refer to objects that are not present, but are considered to be known from before to both the speaker and the listener.

<mark>Example</mark>

(b) Sometimes the speaker only pretends that the object is known to the listener, or implies that it ought to be known to most people. This is often the case with main characters in stories or prominent characters in real life.

<mark>Example</mark>

(c) It is used in expressions of time when referring to the past.

<mark>Example</mark>

(d) It is also used when telling the present time.

Waa immisa <mark>dii</mark> ?	What time is it?
Waa shan <mark>tii</mark> .	It's five o'clock.
Waa saddex <mark>dii</mark> iyo badh <mark>kii</mark> .	It's half past three.

(e) It is used in expression of time with a general reference, i.e. not referring to any actual point in time, but to a potential situation.

Maalintii ilayska waxa aynu ka helnaa qorraxda. *During the day we get light from the SUN.*

(f) Futhermore, it is used in expressions of repetition and frequency. In ths function the demonstrative suffix is usually followed by the particle **–ba**.

Golahani wuxuu shiraa caadi ahaan sannadkiiba laba jeer. This assembly normally convenes TWO TIMES each year. Maxaa lagu qabtaa midkiiba dhismayaasha beesha degaanka? WHAT do they do in each one of the buildings of the local community?

One important type are expressions of percentage.

Example

§ 9.2.3 Placeholder pronouns

	MASC.SING.	FEM.SING	PLURAL
the	ka	ta	kúwa
а	ku	tu	kúwo

These pronouns are used as placeholders or as the dummy head of a noun phrase when a modifier word is used "on its own".

ku kale	another	kuwo kale	others, other ones
ka kale	the other (one)	kuwa kale	the other ones
ka cusub	the new one	ka labaad	the second one

§ 9.3 Possessive pronouns

The idependent possessive pronouns have two different gender forms in the singular and a one common form in the plural.

The owner	The owned o	object is:		
is:	MASC.SING.	FEM.SING.	PLURAL	
1 sg.	káyga	táyda	kúwayga	mine
2 sg.	káaga	táada	kúwaaga	yours
3 sg. m.	kíisa	tíisa	kúw <mark>iis</mark> a	his, its
3 sg. f.	kéeda	téeda	kúweeda	hers, its
1 pl. excl.	kaayága	taayáda	kúw <mark>ayā</mark> ga	ours
1 pl. incl.	kéenna	téenna	kúweenna	ours
2 pl.	kiinna	tíinna	kúwiinna	yours
3 pl.	kóoda	tóoda	kúwooda	theirs

When functioning as the subject of a clause, these possessive pronouns take the subject ending **-u**. See § 13.1.1.

The singular forms of these pronouns are also added as endings to both singular and plural nouns. The initial consonant of the possessive ending is always identical to the consonant of the definite article. See § 4.1 and § 6.3.

kábta	the shoe	mindída	the knife
kábtayda	my shoe	mindídayda	my knife
kábtaada	your shoe	mindídaada	your knife
kábteeda	her shoe	mindídeeda	her knife
kábtooda	their shoe	mindídooda	their knife
kabá <mark>ha</mark>	the shoes	mindiyáha	the knives
kabá <mark>hayga</mark>	my shoes	mindiyáhayga	my knives
kabáhayga kabáhaaga	my shoes your shoes	mindiyáhayga mindiyáhaaga	my knives your knives
	5	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	0

bás <mark>ka</mark>	the bus	gúri <mark>ga</mark>	the house
bás <mark>kayga</mark>	my bus	gúrigayga	my house
báskaaga	your bus	gúrigaaga	your house
báskiisa	his bus	gúrigiisa	his house
báskooda	their bus	gúrigooda	their house
basás <mark>ka</mark>	the buses	guryáha	the houses
basás <mark>ka</mark> basáskayga	the buses my buses	guryáha guryáhayga	the houses my houses
		guryáhayga	
basáskayga	my buses	guryáhayga	my houses your houses

Notice that at the end of the possessive pronouns and endings, there is actually a definite article, e.g., **gúrigayga** *my house*. Also in many other languages the possessive pronouns are used together with the definite article, e.g. Italian *la mia casa* = **gúrigayga** *my house*.

§ 9.3.1 Short possessive endings

After a small number of nouns denoting family members and friends, special shorter forms of the possessive endings are used. These endings lack the final definite article.

Full for	RMS		Short	FORMS	
-kayga	-tayda	my	-kay	-tay	
-kaaga	-taada	your	-kaa	-taa	
-kiisa	-tiisa	his, its	-kiis	-tiis	(-kii -tii)
-keeda	-teeda	her, its	-keed	-teed	
-kayaga	-tayada	our (excl.)	-kayo	-tayo	
-keenna	-teenna	our (incl.)	-keen	-teen	
-kiinna	-tiinna	your	-kiin	-tiin	
-kooda	-tooda	their	-kood	-tood	

¹³/i/ in the suffix spreads across /h/ so that a preceding /a/ becomes assimilated. See § 4.2.1.

Words that are used with the short possessive endings are above all **hoóyo** *mother*, **aábbe** *father*, **waálid** *parents*, **walaál** *sibling*, **habaryár** *maternal aunt*, **abtí** *maternal uncle*, **eéddo** *paternal aunt*, **adeér** *paternal uncle*, **ayeéyo** *grand*-*mother*, **awoówe** *grandfather*, **saaxíib** *friend*, **saaxiibád** *female friend*.¹⁴

hooyá <mark>day</mark>	my mother	aabbáhay	m father
hooyá <mark>daa</mark>	your mther	aabbáhaa	your father
hooyá <mark>diis</mark>	his mother	aabbáheed	her father
hooyádood	their mother	aabbáhood	their father

The full possessive endings are however used with nouns that do not exclusively denote denote a relationship between two persons, such as **nín** *man; husband,* **wíil** *boy; son,* **gabádh/gabár** *girl; daughter,* as well as the collective noun **carruúr** *children*.

Also, if a modifier is added, e.g. an adjective, the full possessive endings are used.

saaxiibádday	my (girl)friend
saaxiibáddayda cusub	my new (girl)friend
walaál <mark>kay</mark>	my brother
walaál <mark>kayga</mark> weyn	my older brother

§ 9.3.2 Implied possessive relations

In possessive constructions where a person is associated with something whose sole "possessor" this person isn't, it is common to use a plural possessive ending.

Aaminá aabbá<mark>hood</mark>

Amina's father (lit. *Amina their father*, i.e. her and and her siblings' father) **Rooblé fásalkooda**

Roble's class (lit. Roble their class, i.e. his and his classmates' class)

¹⁴ Also in Italian there is a similar distinction between, e.g., *la mia casa* 'my house', with the article, and *mia sorella* 'my sister', without it.

adíga déris<mark>kiinna</mark>

your neighbours (lit. *you* (SG) *your* (PL) *neighbours,* i.e. your and your family's neighbours)

§ 9.3.3 Partitive use of possessive suffixes

The possessive endings are commonly used in so called partitive constructions, i.e. after words that express some kind of measure.

With numbers the full possessive suffixes are used.

labadooda	both of them,	the two of them
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With certain other nouns the short possessive suffixes are preferred.

qaarkood	part of them, some of them
badankood	many of them
dhammaántood	all of them
kúlligeen, kulligood	all of us, all of them

§ 9.3.4 Possessive + demonstrative suffix

The demonstrative endings can be added after the possessive endings instead of the definite article that is part of the full possessive forms.

Cumar wuxuu dhammeeyay mundulkiisii. Omar has completed that hut of his, you know. gurigaygan this house of mine

§ 9.4 Interrogative pronouns

Almost all interrogatives in Somali contain one of the two interrogative morphemes /ee/ and /ma/.

	MASC.SG	FEM.SG.	PLURAL	
who?	ayó			
who?, which?	kúma	túma	kúwama	what persons?
what?		maxaý		
which one?	keé	teé	kúwee	which ones?

The singular forms **keé** and **teé** may also be added as endings to nouns, both in the singular and in the plural. The high tone then disappears from the stem of the noun. The initial consonant of the possessive ending is always identical to the consonant of the definite article. See § 4.1 and § 6.3.

INDEF. FORM	DEF. FORM	INTERROGATIV	VE FORM
xág side, direction	xág <mark>ga</mark>	xag <mark>geé</mark> ?	which direction?, where?
hál place	hál <mark>ka</mark>	hal <mark>keé</mark> ?	which place?, where?
éray word	éray <mark>ga</mark>	eray <mark>geé</mark> ?	which word?
erayó word	erayáda	eraya <mark>deé</mark> ?	which words?

Dhárka Xasan waa midabkeé? Which colour are Hassan's clothes?

With certain nouns the interrogative ending **–ma** is often preferred.

goór moment	goormá? / goorteé?	which moment? when?
INDEF. FORM	INTERROGATIVE FORM	

§ 9.4.1 Interrogative use of possessive forms

When asking for someone's name, **short** possessive endings are used with an interrogative effect. In order to signal this interrogative function, the high tone is lost on the noun itself and only realised on the ending, in a similar manner as with the interrogative ending **–eé**.

Magacáa? 15(What's) your name?Magacéed?(What's) her name?Magacíis?(What's) his name?

 $^{^{\}rm 15}$ Notice that /k/ in the possessive suffixes is lost after a stem that ends in /c/.

§ 10. Adjectives

Somali doesn't have as many basic, non-derived adjectives as English. Some of the most frequent ones are:

adág hard	cád white, light	culús heavy
cusúb new	dhéer long, tall, high	dhów close
fóg distant	fudúd light, easy	jecél fond (of)
madów black, dark	nóol living, alive	wéyn big
xún bad	yár little, small	

§ 10.1 Formation of adjectives

§ 10.1.1 Adjectives Derived from Nouns

Quite many adjectives are derived from nouns through different suffixes that often end in **–n** such as **–án, –sán, –óon**.

wanáag something good	wanaag<mark>sán</mark> good
fárax happiness	farax<mark>sán</mark> happy
gáab shortness, something short	gaabán short
qurúx beauty	qurxoón beautiful

Many adjectives are also derived from nouns through the suffix **-eéd**.

A few are derived through the use of **-aád**.

kiimiko chemistry, chemicals kiimikaád chemical

§ 10.1.2 Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers are adjectives. They are all formed in a regular way by adding the adjectival suffix **–aád** to the cardinal noun.

1 = ków	one	1aad = koowaád / kowaád first
2 = lába / lábo	two	2aad = labaád second

3 = sáddex	three	3aad = saddexaád	third
4 = áfar	four	4aad = afraád / afaraád	fourth
5 = shán	five	5aad = shanaád	fifth

§ 10.1.3 Adjectives Derived from Verbs

Adjectives derived from verbs may be referred to as **PARTICIPLES** or **DEVERBAL ADJECTIVES**. They are formed through the addition of the ending –án or –sán.

sawiraa, sawirtaa draws	sawirán drawn
qoraa, qortaa writes	qorán written
sameeyaa, samaysaa does, makes	samaysán done, made

§ 10.1.4 Phrasal adjectives

Often phrases consisting of a noun + an adjective behave like adjectives, not like noun phrases. Compare:

baaskiilku waa uu qurux badan yahay. Maryan waa macallimad wanaagsan ilkahoodii xoogga weynaa waxa ay ahaayeen kuwo af badan. (dummy pronoun)

They most often contain one of the adjectives **badan** *much*, **weyn** *big*, **yar** *small*, e.g. **qurúx badan** *beautiful*, **dá' weyn** *old*. The main high tone is on the noun, and the adjective usually has a less prominent high tone or no tone at all.

Waxa ay kú nóol yihiin meeláha dhágaxa badan.

They live in **stony** places.

Just like in the above example, the modifier noun (**dhágaxa**) has to be in the defininte form if the head noun (**meeláha**) is in the definite form or if it has a demonstrative or possessive ending.

nin da' weyn, ninka da'da weyn baaskiil qurux badan, baaskiilka quruxda badan

§ 10.2 The Inflection of Adjectives

Somali adjectives have very few inflectional forms. The gender and definiteness of a noun has no effect on an accompaying adjective.

gabár yar a small girl	wiil yar a small boy
gabárta yar the small girl	wiilka yar the small boy

§ 10.2.1 The Distributive Form

Adjectives inflect for something rather similar to a plural form through reduplication of the beginning of the word. In most adjectives the initial syllable is repeated, but some irregularities exist.

BASE FORM		DISTRIBUTIVE FORM
yár	little	yaryár
wanaagsán	good	wanwanaagsán
gaabán	short	gaagaabán
dhéer	long	dhaadhéer
wéyn	big	waawéyn

This form expresses a repetition or spread (distribution) of the quality, either to different objects or to different parts of an object. Therefore this form doesn't automatically occur together with nouns in the plural. Furthermore, it may occur together with nouns in the singular, especially collective nouns as well as mass nouns composed of several small parts.

dád waaweyn grownup people, adults, carruúr yaryar small children

cáws dhaadheer long grass (since each straw is long)

It is not obligatory to use the distributive form, but with common adjectives it is very frequently used. With less common adjectives, however, this form is less frequent.

§ 10.2.2 Sound alternations in the stem

Some adjectives exhibit sound alternations in the stem, so that the base form of the adjective differs from other forms with an ending.

BASE FORM	STEM	
cad white, light	/cadd/	caddaa was white, light
culus heavy	/cus_l/	cuslaa was heavy
eg similar	/ek/	ekaa was similar
dhan all	/dhamm/	dhammi (subject form)

§ 10.3 The Comparative Degree

To express the equivalent of the English comprative degree, the preposition **ká** *than*, *from*, *of* is placed before the adjective. In Somali there is no comparative form of the adjective itself.

Shan waa ay ká yar tahay siddéed. *Five is less than eight.* (lit. *Five it is little from eight.*)

§ 10.4 The Superlative Degree

The equivalent of the English superlative degree is expressed by the particle **ugú** (*the*) *most, the very -st* which expresses a meaning similar to *the most* or *the very*.

ugú wéyn (the very) biggest, the most big

§11. Verbs

Almost all Somali verbs are inflected in a completely regular and predictable way. There are only six irregular verbs.

Just like in French, German, Finnish, Russian, Arabic and many other languages, there are different verb forms in Somali for the first person (*I*, *we*), the second person (*you*) and the third person (*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*) in the singular as well as in the plural. In the third person singular there are also different forms for the masculine (*he*) and the feminine (*she*), as in Arabic.

§ 11.1 The Presens Tense

The suffix /aa/ expresses the present tense.

The suffix /t/ expresses the 2nd person (*you*), both singular and plural, as well as the feminine 3rd person singular (*she*).

The suffix /n/ expresses the plural (*we, you, they*).

1 sg.	Ι	- <mark>aa</mark>	heesaa	I sing
2 sg.	уои	- <mark>t</mark> aa	heestaa	you sing
3 sg.m.	he, it	- <mark>aa</mark>	heesaa	he sings
3 sg.f.	she, it	- <mark>taa</mark>	heestaa	she sings
1 pl.	we	- <mark>naa</mark>	heesnaa	we sing
2 pl.	уои	- <mark>taan</mark>	heestaan	you sing
3 pl.	they	- <mark>aan</mark>	heesaan	they sing

§ 11.2 The Past Tense

The past tense is expressed by the suffix /ay/ word finally, and by /ee/ when followed by /n/. The suffixes expressing person and number are exactly the same as in the present tense.

1 sg	Ι	- <mark>ay</mark>	heesay	I sang
2 sg	уои	- <mark>tay</mark>	heestay	you sang
3 sg.m.	he, it	- <mark>ay</mark>	heesay	he sang
3 sg.f.	she, it	- <mark>tay</mark>	heestay	she sang
1 pl.	we	- <mark>nay</mark>	heesnay	we sang
2 pl.	уои	- <mark>teen</mark>	heesteen	you sang
3 pl.	they	- <mark>een</mark>	heeseen	they sang

There is only one past tense in Somali, corresponding to three tenses in English: PAST (*sang*), PRESENT PERFECT (*has sung*), PAST PERFECT (*had sung*), but Somali also has aspects, just like English. See § 11.4 and § 11.6.

§ 11.3 Sound alternations

The regular verbs can be divided into three different groups, also called **CONJUGATIONS**, with only small differences between those groups.

However, quite a few different sound alternations occur in all groups, depending on the last sound of the stem and the first sound in the ending.

In the examples below, only the present tense forms are given, but of course, the exact same alternations also occur in the past tense.

§ 11.3.1 Conjugation 1

This group mainly contains verbs with a stem that ends in a consonant.

(a) If the stem ends in /d, y, w, c, h, x, kh, q, '/ a following /t/ becomes /d/, just like it does in the different suffixes that are added to nouns. See § 4.1.

1 sg	bood-aa jumps	dhac-aa falls; happens
2 sg	bood-daa	dhac-daa
3 sg.m.	bood-aa	dhac-aa
3 sg.f.	bood-daa	dhac-daa
1 pl.	bood-naa	dhac-naa
2 pl.	bood-daan	dhac- <mark>d</mark> aan
3 pl.	bood-aan	dhac-aan

(b) The /t/ in the suffixes merges with a preceding /l/ in the stem. The result is /sh/.

1 sg	hel-aa finds, gets
2 sg	he <mark>sh</mark> aa
3 sg.m.	hel-aa
3 sg.f.	he <mark>sh</mark> aa
1 pl.	hel-naa
2 pl.	he <mark>sh</mark> aan
3 pl.	hel-aan

(c) The /t/ in the suffixes merges with a preceding /dh/ in the stem. The result is a long /dhdh/. This is however not reflected in the spelling, since the letter <dh> is never doubled.

Such forms with non-initial /dh/ occur mainly in the north-west. In the nort-east, the centre and the south, /dh/ is usually replaced by /r/, which does not lead to any sound alternations.

1 sg	hadh-aa ^N remains	har-aa ^s remains
2 sg	hadhaa [hadhdhaa]	har-taa
3 sg.m.	hadh-aa	har-aa
3 sg.f.	hadhaa [ha dhdh aa]	har-taa
1 pl.	hadh-naa	har-naa
2 pl.	hadhaan [ha dhdh aan]	har-taan
3 pl.	hadh-aan	har-aan

(d) If the stem ends in /k/ or /m/, this consonant alternates with /g/ and /n/ before endings beginning with a consonant. The reason is that /k/ and /m/ can only occur when directly followed by a vowel.

1 sg	buk-aa is ill	tartam-aa competes
2 sg	bu <mark>g</mark> -taa	tartan-taa
3 sg.m.	buk-aa	tartam-aa
3 sg.f.	bug-taa	tartan-taa
1 pl.	bu <mark>g</mark> -naa	tartan-naa
2 pl.	bug-taan	tartan-taan
3 pl.	buk-aan	tartam-aan

(e) If the stem ends in two consonants, they must be separated by an inserted vowel when the following ending begins with a consonant. A cluster of three consonants is impossible in Somali. Usually, it is the vowel already present in the stem that is copied.

1 sg	gudb-aa passes	dalb-aa requests	ord-aa runs
2 sg	gud <mark>u</mark> b-taa	dal <mark>a</mark> b-taa	or <mark>o</mark> d-daa
3 sg.m.	gudb-aa	dalb-aa	ord-aa
3 sg.f.	gud <mark>u</mark> b-taa	dal <mark>a</mark> b-taa	or <mark>o</mark> d-daa
1 pl.	gud <mark>u</mark> b-naa	dal <mark>a</mark> b-naa	or <mark>o</mark> d-naa
2 pl.	gud <mark>u</mark> b-taan	dal <mark>a</mark> b-taan	or <mark>o</mark> d-daan
3 pl.	gudb-aan	dalb-aan	ord-aan

(f) Some verbs exhibit both vowel insertion and consonant alternation.

1 sg	ark-aa sees	hadl-aa talks	kulm-aa meets
2 sg	ar <mark>a</mark> g-taa	had <mark>a</mark> shaa	kul <mark>a</mark> n-taa
3 sg.m.	ark-aa	hadl-aa	kulm-aa
3 sg.f.	ar <mark>a</mark> g-taa	had <mark>a</mark> shaa	kul <mark>a</mark> n-taa
1 pl.	ar <mark>a</mark> g-naa	had <mark>a</mark> l-naa	kul <mark>a</mark> n-naa
2 pl.	ar <mark>a</mark> g-taan	had <mark>a</mark> shaan	kul <mark>a</mark> n-taan
3 pl.	ark-aan	hadl-aan	kulm-aan

The inserted vowel in the last verb is unexpected, since it is not a copy of the vowel in the root.

(g) If the stem ends in /aab/, an alternation with /ow/ occurs before endings beginning with a consonant.

1 sg	bilaab-aa begins	magacaab-aa tells the name of
2 sg	bil <mark>ow-</mark> daa	magacow-daa
3 sg.m.	bilaab-aa	magacaab-aa
3 sg.f.	bil <mark>ow-</mark> daa	magacow-daa
1 pl.	bil <mark>ow-</mark> naa	magacow-naa
2 pl.	bil <mark>ow-</mark> daan	magacow-daan
3 pl.	bilaab-aan	magacaab-aan

§ 11.3.2 Conjugation 2

This group contains mainly verbs with a stem ending in /i/ or /ee/.

When the ending begins with a vowel, the consonant /y/ is inserted as a buffer between the vowel of the stem and that in the suffix.

(a) A /t/ in the ending changes to /s/ after the vowel /i/.

Between vowels the /n/ in the 1st person plural ending becomes /nn/.

1 sg	sii <mark>y</mark> aa gives	fiiri<mark>y</mark>aa looks
2 sg	sii-saa	fiiri-saa
3 sg.m.	sii <mark>y</mark> aa	fiiri <mark>y</mark> aa
3 sg.f.	sii-saa	fiiri-saa
1 pl.	sii <mark>n</mark> naa	fiiri <mark>n</mark> naa
2 pl.	sii-saan	fiiri-saan
3 pl.	sii <mark>y</mark> aan	fiiri <mark>y</mark> aan

(b) A final long /ee/ in the stem changes to the diphthong /ey/ when the ending begins with a consonant. Spelling with <ay> is more common.

A /t/ in the ending changes to /s/ also after /y/.

1 sg	samee<mark>y</mark>aa da	es, makes
2 sg	sam <mark>ey-s</mark> aa	or samay-saa
3 sg.m.	samee <mark>y</mark> aa	
3 sg.f.	sam <mark>ey-s</mark> aa	or samay-saa
1 pl.	sam <mark>ey-</mark> naa	or samay-naa
2 pl.	sam <mark>ey-s</mark> aan	or samay-saan
3 pl.	samee <mark>y</mark> aan	

(c) A few verbs exhibit a variation between conjugation 1 and 2.

According to conjugation 2 we find the alternation /t/ > /s/ after /i/. According to conjugation 1 we find the alternation /t/ > /d/ after /i/.

1 sg	akhri <mark>y</mark> aa reads	akhri <mark>y</mark> aa reads
2 sg	akhri <mark>-s</mark> aa	akhri-daa
3 sg.m.	akhri <mark>y</mark> aa	akhri <mark>y</mark> aa
3 sg.f.	akhri- <mark>s</mark> aa	akhri-daa
1 pl.	akhri <mark>n</mark> naa	akhri <mark>n</mark> naa
2 pl.	akhri- <mark>s</mark> aan	akhri- <mark>d</mark> aan
3 pl.	akhri <mark>y</mark> aan	akhri <mark>y</mark> aan

§ 11.3.3 Conjugation 3

This group contains mainly verbs with a stem ending in /t/. As a beginner it is easy to mistake such masculine 3rd person singular forms for feminine forms. This /t/ is used to derive new verbs, especially autobenefactive¹⁶ verbs, from other verbs or nouns.

Verbs in conjugation 3 have two different inflectional stems, one when the ending begins with a vowel and another when the ending begins with a consonant.

Before an ending that begins with a consonant, the stem ends in a vowel and that stem is therefore called the **vowel stem**.

Before an ending that begins with a vowel, the sem ends in a consonant and that stem is therefore called the **consonant stem**.

Notice that the 1st person plural always ends in **–nnaa** in conjugation 3.

(a) In the most basic cases, the consonant stem ends in /t/ whereas the vowel stem ends in /a/.

1 sg	hays <mark>t</mark> -aa holds, has	dhig <mark>t</mark> -aa studies
2 sg	hays <mark>a</mark> -taa	dhig <mark>a</mark> -taa
3 sg.m.	hays <mark>t</mark> -aa	dhig <mark>t</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	hays <mark>a</mark> -taa	dhig <mark>a</mark> -taa
1 pl.	hays <mark>a</mark> -nnaa	dhig <mark>a</mark> -nnaa
2 pl.	hays <mark>a</mark> -taan	dhig <mark>a</mark> -taan
3 pl.	hays <mark>t</mark> -aan	dhig <mark>t</mark> -aan

Other verbs of this type:

bart-aa, bara-taa *learns*

¹⁶ Autobenefactive verbs express actions that have some positive effect for the person carrying out the action.

(b) After the consonants /d, y, w, c, h, x, kh, q, '/, the stem final /t/ is replaced by /d/. See § 4.1.

1 sg	booq <mark>d</mark> -aa visits
2 sg	booq <mark>a</mark> -taa
3 sg.m.	booq <mark>d</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	booq <mark>a</mark> -taa
1 pl.	booq <mark>a</mark> -nnaa
2 pl.	booq <mark>a</mark> -taan
3 pl.	booq <mark>d</mark> -aan

(c) Many verbs in conjugation 3 have a consonant stem ending in /ad/, whereas the vowel stem just ends in /a/. This always happens after a cluster of two consonants, as well as after certin single consonants such as /k/ and /sh/.

1 sg	gashad-aa <i>puts on (clothes)</i>	
2 sg	gash <mark>a</mark> -taa	
3 sg.m.	gash <mark>ad</mark> -aa	
3 sg.f.	gash <mark>a</mark> -taa	
1 pl.	gash <mark>a</mark> -nnaa	
2 pl.	gash <mark>a</mark> -taan	
3 pl.	gash <mark>ad</mark> -aan	

Other verbs of this type:

bogsad-aa	bogsa-taa	recovers
dhaansad-aa	dhaansa-taa	fetches water
kaydsad-aa	kaydsa-taa	keeps, stores
karsad-aa	karsa-taa	cooks for oneself
tukad-aa	tuka-taa	prays

(d) Several verbs in conjugation 3 have a consonant stem ending in /aad/, whereas the vowel stem just ends in /aa/. This mainly happens in verbs that are derived from adjectives.

1 sg	dhamm<mark>aad</mark>-aa <i>finishes, ends</i> (intransitive)
2 sg	dhamm <mark>aa</mark> taa
3 sg.m.	dhamm <mark>aad</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	dhamm <mark>aa</mark> -taa
1 pl.	dhamm <mark>aa</mark> -nnaa
2 pl.	dhamm <mark>aa</mark> -taan
3 pl.	dhamm <mark>aad</mark> -aan

This verb is derived from the adjective **dhan** *whole, all,* which has the stem /dhamm/.

Other verbs of this type:

og aware	ogaadaa	ogaataa	becomes aware, finds out

(e) A few verbs in conjugation 3 have a /t/ preceded by a vowel in the consonant stem. In such verbs the vowel stem ends in /da/.

1 sg	qaa <mark>t</mark> -aa takes
2 sg	qaa <mark>da</mark> -taa
3 sg.m.	qaa <mark>t</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	qaa <mark>da</mark> -taa
1 pl.	qaa <mark>da</mark> -nnaa
2 pl.	qaa <mark>da</mark> -taan
3 pl.	qaa <mark>t</mark> -aan

Other verbs of this type:

wataa	wadataa	drives, leads, carries
sitaa	sidataa	carries, wears

(f) A few verbs in conjugation 3 have a consonant stem that in the northwest ends in /dhdh/ [dh:], whereas in the south and east it ends in /rt/ (and inflects in the most basic way). The intense pronunciation of /dhdh/ [dh:] is of course not reflected by the spelling. The vowel stem ends in /dha/ in the north-west and /ra/ in the south and east.

1 sg	xi <mark>dh</mark> -aa ^N	[xidh <mark>dh</mark> -aa]	xir<mark>t</mark>-aa^sputs on (clothes)
2 sg	xi <mark>dha</mark> -taa	[xidh <mark>a</mark> -taa]	xir <mark>a</mark> -taa
3 sg.m.	xi <mark>dh</mark> -aa	[xidh <mark>dh</mark> -aa]	xir <mark>t</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	xi <mark>dha</mark> -taa	[xidh <mark>a</mark> -taa]	xir <mark>a</mark> -taa
1 pl.	xi <mark>dha</mark> -nnaa	[xidh <mark>a</mark> -nnaa]	xir <mark>a-nn</mark> aa
2 pl.	xi <mark>dha</mark> -taan	[xidh <mark>a</mark> -taan]	xir <mark>a</mark> -taan
3 pl.	xi <mark>dh</mark> -aan	[xidh <mark>dh</mark> -aa]	xir <mark>t</mark> -aan

(g) A couple of verbs have a vowel stem ending in /o/ instead of /a/.

1 sg	soc <mark>d</mark> -aa walks
2 sg	soc <mark>o</mark> -taa
3 sg.m.	soc <mark>d</mark> -aa
3 sg.f.	soc <mark>o</mark> -taa
1 pl.	soc <mark>o</mark> -nnaa
2 pl.	soc <mark>o</mark> -taan
3 pl.	soc <mark>d</mark> -aan

Other verbs of this type:

noqdaa	noqotaa	becomes
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§ 11.4 The Infinitive

The infinitive has two different endings depending on the conjugation, i.e. whether the stem ends in a consonant or in a vowel. Verbs in conjugation 1 take the ending $-\mathbf{i}$, which is the used after a consonant, whereas verbs in conjugation 2 and 3 take the ending $-\mathbf{n}$, used after a vowel. In the infinitive, there is always a high tone on the last vowel position of the stem, before the ending.

		PRESENT	INFINITIV	
CONJUGATION 1	-i	qor-taa	qór-i	write
CONJUGATION 2	–n	akhri-saa	akhrí-n	read
		samay-saa	samaý-n	do, make
CONJUGATION 3	–n	haysa-taa	haysá-n	have, hold
		soco-taa	socó-n	walk

A handful of verbs with a stem ending in a vowel has two infinitive forms, since they exhibit a variation between conjugation 1 and 2, e.g.

CONJUGATION 1	—i	akhri-daa	ahkrí-y-i	write
CONJUGATION 2	–n	akhri-saa	akhrí-n	read

The Somali infinitive form is far less frequently used than the English infinitive. It only occurs together with a few auxiliary verbs such as **doonaa**, **doontaa** *will*, **jiray**, **jirtay** *used to*, **karaa**, **kartaa** *can*, **lahaa**, **lahayd** *would* (*have*), **rabaa**, **rabtaa** *intends*, **waayaa**, **waydaa** *is unable*...

The auxiliary always follows after the infinitive.

Cali wuu bogsán doonaa. Ali will get well. Sáhra wáxa ay samaýn kartaa waxyaabó badan.

Sahra can **do** many things.

Corresponding to most other usages of the English inifinitive, Somali applies the verbal noun (see § 7.3) or a full subclause (see § 15.2.1).

Waa ay jecél yihiin ákhriska. They like to read.Waxa aan rabaa in aan tago. I want to leave.

§ 11.5 Progressive verb forms

Somali, just like English, has simple and progressive verb forms, but only in the present and the past tense. The progressive forms contain the progressive suffix /ay/. It precedes the person, number and tense endings.

In all progressive forms a following /t/ changes to /s/ since the progressive suffix ends in /y/.

There is always a high tone on the last vowel position before the progressive suffix /ay/.

	SIMPLE PRESE	NT	PROGRESSIVE PR	ESENT
1 sg	heesaa	I sing	heés <mark>ay</mark> aa	I am singing
2 sg	heestaa		heés <mark>ay</mark> saa	
3 sg.m.	heesaa		heés <mark>ay</mark> aa	
3 sg.f.	heestaa		heés <mark>ay</mark> saa	
1 pl.	heesnaa		heés <mark>ay</mark> naa	
2 pl.	heestaan		heés <mark>ay</mark> saan	
3 pl.	heesaan		heés <mark>ay</mark> aan	
	SIMPLE PAST		PROGRESSIVE PA	ST
1 sg	SIMPLE PAST heesay	I sang	PROGRESSIVE PA heés<mark>ay</mark>ay	ST I was singing
1 sg 2 sg	_	I sang		-
Ū	heesay	I sang	heés <mark>ay</mark> ay	-
2 sg	heesay heestay	I sang	heés <mark>ay</mark> ay heés <mark>aysay</mark>	-
2 sg 3 sg.m.	heesay heestay heesay	I sang	heés <mark>ay</mark> ay heés <mark>aysay</mark> heés <mark>ay</mark> ay	-
2 sg 3 sg.m. 3 sg.f.	heesay heestay heesay heestay	I sang	heés <mark>ay</mark> ay heés <mark>aysay</mark> heés <mark>ay</mark> ay heés <mark>aysay</mark>	-

In conjugation 2 and 3, the progressive suffix is always preceded by an /n/, since the progressive forms are based on the infinitive.

2.	siiyaa, siisaa	gives	sií-n-ay-aa	he is giving
	sameeyaa, samaysaa	does	samaý- <mark>n-ay</mark> -aa	he is doing
	akhriyaa, akhrisaa	reads	akhrí -n-ay -aa	he is reading
1.	akhriyaa, akhridaa	reads	akhrí- <mark>y-ay</mark> -aa	he is reading

In conjugation 3, the vowel stem is used before /n/ of the progressive forms.

	C-STEM,	V-STEM		V-STEM	
3.	booqdaa	, booqa-taa	takes	booqá- <mark>n-ay</mark> -aa	he is visiting
	qaataa,	qaada-taa	visits	qaadá -n-ay -aa	he is taking
	socdaa,	soco-taa	walks	socó-n-ay-aa	he is walking

§ 11.5.1 Present progressive expressing near future

Similarly as in English, the Somali present progressive may be used to express actions in an immediate future.

Bérri waxaan ká dul boódayaa Maroodí.

Tomorrow I'm jumping over the Elephant.

§ 11.5.2 Verbs without progressive forms

Some verbs are very rarely used in the progressive forms. Above all verbs denoting states (not actions) belong to that group.

rabaa, rabtaa wishes, wants léeyahay, léedahay has, owns haystaa, haysataa holds, has

0r

Also, the verb stem **doon**– has developed a meaning difference between the simple and the progressive forms. The simple forms **doonaa**, **doontaa** are used as future tense auxiliary, corresponding to English *will*, whereas the progressive forms **doónayaa**, **doónaysaa** are have the modal meaning *wants* (*to*).

§ 11.6 The Habitual Past Tense

The habitual past consists of the infinitive of the main verb followed by the auxiliary **jiray**, **jirtay** *used to* in the simple past.

1 sg	waa aan	heési jiray	I used to sing
2 sg	waa aad	heési jirtay	you used to sing
3 sg.m.	waa uu	heési jiray	he used to sing
3 sg.f.	waa ay	heési jirtay	she used to sing
1 pl.	waa aan	heési jirnay	we used to sing
2 pl.	waa aad	heési jirteen	you used to sing
3 pl.	waa ay	heési jireen	they used to sing

The habitual past tense expresses actions that occurred repeatedly in the past.

Maalín waliba waa uu waraabín jiray moxóggii.

Every day he used to water the cassava. / Every day he watered the cassava.

As shown in the example, the auxiliary *used to* is not obligatory in English. In Somali, however, the habitual past is systematically used when describing actions that were repeated in the past.

§ 11.7 The Future Tense

The future tense consists of the infinitive of the main verb followed by the auxiliary **doonaa**, **doontaa** *will* in the simple present tense.

1 sg	waa aan	heési doonaa	I will sing
2 sg	waa aad	heési doontaa	you will sing
3 sg.m.	waa uu	heési doonaa	he will sing
3 sg.f.	waa ay	heési doontaa	she will sing
1 pl.	waa aan	heési doonnaa	we will sing
2 pl.	waa aad	heési doontaan	you will sing
3 pl.	waa ay	heési doonaan	they will sing

The future tense is used to express predicted actions in the future.

Waa uu bogsán doonaa. He will get well.

In order to express actions in an immediate future, less as a prediction and more as a fact, the present progressive is often used instead of the future tense.

§ 11.8 Survey of tenses and aspects

	ASP	PECT:		
TENSE:		SIMPLE	PROGRESSIVE	HABITUAL
PAST		I sang	I was singing	I used to sing
	1 sg	heesay	heés <mark>ayay</mark>	heési jiray
	2 sg	heestay	heés <mark>ays</mark> ay	heési jirtay
	3 sg.m.	heesay	heés <mark>ay</mark> ay	heési jiray
	3 sg.f.	heestay	heésaysay	heési jirtay
	1 pl.	heesnay	heés <mark>ay</mark> nay	heési jirnay
	2 pl.	heesteen	heésayseen	heési jirteen
	3 pl.	heeseen	heésayeen	heési jireen
PRESENT		I sing	I am singing	
	1 sg	heesaa	heés <mark>ay</mark> aa	
	2 sg	heestaa	heés <mark>aysaa</mark>	
	3 sg.m.	heesaa	heés <mark>ay</mark> aa	
	3 sg.f.	heestaa	heés <mark>ay</mark> saa	
	1 pl.	heesnaa	heés <mark>ayn</mark> aa	
	2 pl.	heestaan	heés <mark>ay</mark> saan	
	3 pl.	heesaan	heésayaan	
FUTURE		I will sing		
	1 sg	heési doonaa		
	2 sg	heési doontaa		
	3 sg.m.	heési doonaa		
	3 sg.f.	heési doontaa		
	1 pl.	heési doonnaa		

- 2 pl. heési doontaan
- 3 pl. heési doonaan

§ 11.9 Reduced verb forms

The full inflection of Somali verbs generally consists of **five** distinct forms representing: *he=I; she=you*(SG); *we; you*(PL); *they*.

Alongside the full inflection, there is also a reduced inflection with only **three** distinctive forms representing: *he=I=you=they; she; we*.

SIMPLE PRESENT	FULL FORMS	REDUCED FORMS
1 sg.	heesaa	heesa sings
2 sg.	hees <mark>t</mark> aa	heesa
3 sg. m.	heesaa	heesa
3 sg. f.	hees <mark>t</mark> aa	hees <mark>t</mark> a
1 pl.	hees <mark>n</mark> aa	hees <mark>n</mark> a
2 pl.	hees <mark>t</mark> aa <mark>n</mark>	heesa
3 pl.	heesaa <mark>n</mark>	heesa

The reduced verb inflection only has the suffix **-t**- in the feminine 3rd person sg. (*she*) och the suffix **-n**- in the 1st person pl. (*we*). Furthermore, the reduced present tense forms have a short **-a** instead of the long **-aa** that is found in the full forms.

There are reduced forms for all the tenses and aspects.

	ASP	PECT:		
TENSE:		SIMPLE	PROGRESSIVE	HABITUAL
PAST		heesay	heésayay	heési jiray
	3 sg.f.	hees <mark>t</mark> ay	heésay <mark>s</mark> ay	heési jir <mark>t</mark> ay
	1 pl.	hees <mark>n</mark> ay	heésay <mark>n</mark> ay	heési jir <mark>n</mark> ay
PRESENT		heesa	heésaya	
	3 sg.f.	hees <mark>t</mark> a	heésay <mark>s</mark> a	
	1 pl.	hees <mark>n</mark> a	heésay <mark>n</mark> a	
FUTURE		heési doona		
	3 sg.f.	heési doon <mark>t</mark> a		
	1 pl.	heési doon <mark>n</mark> a		

The reduced forms are used in two contexts:

- in positive main clauses, if the subject of the clause is focused,

– in positive relative clauses, if the clause does not contain any word expressing the subject, i.e. the subject of the subclause is the head noun (the antecedent) of the subclause.

<mark>Examples</mark>

Often, the Somali reduced verb forms correspond to participles in other langauges, e.g. English participles in *–ing*.

bisád húrdaya *a cat that is sleeping = a sleeping cat*

Some Somali reduced verb forms correspond to adjectives in other languages.

general soó socd-a the following, nextf. sg. soó soco-ta

In other grammatical descriptions of Somali, the REDUCED verb forms are also referred to as SHORT, ATTRIBUTIVE or RELATIVE verb forms, or as forms of the RESTRICTED verb paradigm.

§ 11.10 The Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood forms express actions that are not taking place in the real world. They may be imaginary, wished for, hoped for, or simply not occurring at all. These forms are therefore mainly used

- in negative clauses,

- in subordinate clauses containing a subject word and

- in wishes and indirect commands (optative constructions).

	ASP	ECT:		
TENSE:		SIMPLE	PROGRESSIVE	HABITUAL
PAST SUBJ	UNCTIVE			
		heesin	heés <mark>ay</mark> n(in)	heési <mark>jir</mark> in
PRESENTS	SUBJUNCT	TIVE		
	1 sg	heeso	heésayo	
	2 sg	heesto	heésayso	
		/ heestid	/ heés <mark>aysid</mark>	
	3 sg.m.	heeso	heés ayo	
	3 sg.f.	heesto	heés <mark>ayso</mark>	
	1 pl.	heesno	heés <mark>ayn</mark> o	
	2 pl.	heestáan	heés <mark>ay</mark> sáan	
	3 pl.	heesáan	heésayáan	
FUTURE S	UBJUNCTI	IVE		
	1 sg	heési doono		
	2 sg	heési doonto		
		/ heési doontid		

- 3 sg.m. heési doono
- 3 sg.f. heési doonto
- 1 pl. heési doonno
- 2 pl. heési doontáan
- 3 pl. **heési doonáan**

The present subjunctive ends in **–o** instead of **–aa**, whereas the forms in **–aan** are written in the same way in both the subjunctive and the ordinary

present tense. However, the subjunctive **-áan** has a high tone on the second to last vowel position, pronounced as a falling tone over the duration of the long /aa/.

In the 2nd person singular, there are two alternative endings: **-to** or **-tid**. The longer one has a somewhat higher stilistic value.

In the past subjunctive there aren't different forms for the different persons and numbers, only one common form that generally ends in –(i)n.

	SIMPLE	PROGRESSIVE
CONJUGATION 1	–in	–aynin / –ayn
CONJUGATION 2 & 3	nin /n	–naynin / –nayn

§ 11.10.1 Negative forms of the present progressive

The present progressive can be negated in two different ways.

	NEGATION + SUBJUNCTIVE	INFINITIV + "NEGA	ATION VERB"
1 sg.	má heésayo	heési maayo	I'm not singing
2 sg.	má heésayso	heési mayso / maysid	
3 sg. m.	má heésayo	heési maayo	
3 sg. f.	má heésayso	heési mayso	
1 pl	má heésayno	heési mayno	
2 pl	má heésaysáan	heési maysáan	
3 pl	má heésayáan	heési maayáan	

§ 11.10.2 Reduced Subjunctive Forms

When there are at the same time two reasons to use the subjunctive forms, special reduced forms are used instead of the full forms presented above.

The reduced subjunctive forms do not differentiate between past and present tense, nor between different persons and numbers.

ASP	ECT:			
TENSE:	SIMPLE	PROGRESSIVE	HABITUAL	
PAST SUBJUNCTIVE				
	heesin	heés <mark>ayn(in)</mark>	heési <mark>jir</mark> in	

PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE

heesin

heésayn(in)

FUTURE SUBJUNCTIVE

heési doonin

The reduced subjunctive forms are used in

- negative main clauses with a focused noun phrase, and in

Maxaa aysan u lahayn carruurta qaar saaxiibbo?

Why do some of the children not have friends?

– negative subordinate clauses.

<mark>Example</mark>

§ 11.10.3 The Optative Construction

The optative consists of the the subjunctive forms of the verb preceded by the short subject pronoun in the 1st and 2nd person, and by the sentence particle **há** in the 3rd person.

1 sg	aan heéso	let me sing
2 sg	aad heésto / aad heéstid	you should sing
3 sg.m.	há heeso	let/make him sing
3 sg.f.	há heesto	let/make her sing
1 pl.	aan heésno	let's sing
2 pl.	aad heéstaan / aad heésteen	you should sing
3 pl.	há heesaan / há heeseen	let/make them sing

Instead of the subjunctive forms in **–aan**, the past tense forms in **–een** are frequently used.

§ 11.10.4 The Conditional Construction

The conditional consists of the infinitive of the main verb followed by the irregular auxiliary **lahaa**, **lahayd** *would* (*have*) in the simple past tense.

1 sg	waa aan	heési lahaa	I would have sung
2 sg	waa aad	heési lahayd	you would have sung
3 sg.m.	waa uu	heési lahaa	he would have sung
3 sg.f.	waa ay	heési lahayd	she would have sung
1 pl.	waa aan	heési lahayn	we would have sung
2 pl.	waa aad	heési lahaydeen	you would have sung
3 pl.	waa ay	heési lahaayeen	they would have sung

The conditional is used in sentences with a conditional clause to express that the situation is not a real possibility any more.

The construction is also used in subclauses to express a future action from the perspective of the past.

§ 11.11 The Imperative Mood

The imperative singular form has no ending. It therefore equals the stem of the verb.

The imperative plural form takes the ending **–a**.

In most imperative forms, the high tone is always on the second to last vowel position. The only exception are verbs in conjugation 3, whose imperative singular form ends in a high-toned $-\acute{0}$.

Conjugation 1

SIMPLE PRESENT, 3 SING.		IMPERAT	IVE		
MASC.	FEM.		SG.	PL.	
sawir-aa	sawir-t-aa	draws	sáwir	sawír-a	draw!

In conjugation 2, the buffer consonant /y/ is inserted between the vowel of the stem and the vowel of the plural ending.

akhri-y-aa	akhri-saa	reads	ákhri	akhrí-y-a	read!
shaqee-y-aa	shaqey-saa	works	shaqée	shaqeé- <mark>y</mark> -a	work!

In conjugation 3, the vowel stem is used in the singular and the consonant stem in the plural. However, the final /a/ of the vowel stem changes to /o/ in the imperative, since it becomes word final.¹⁷

booqd-aa	booqa-taa	visits	booqó	boóqd-a	visit!
qaat-aa	qaada-taa	takes	qaadó	qaát-a	take!

Conjugation 1 verbs in **–aab-aa** (m.), **–ow-daa** (f.), as well as conjugation 3 verbs in **–aad-aa** (m.), **–aa-taa** (f.), have a singular imperative form in **–ow**.

¹⁷ The same type of alternation is found in feminine nouns like **hoóyo** *mor*, **hooyáda** *modern*, with /o/ in word final position, but /a/ when a suffix is added.

bilaab-aa	bilow-daa	begins	bilow	bilaab-a	begin!
ogaad-aa	ogaa-taa	finds out	ogow	ogaad-a	find out!

§ 11.11.1 The Prohibitive Construction

In Somali you can't form a negative imperative by adding a negation to the positive imperative forms. Instead there is a special particle **ha** *don't* which is followed by the reduced present/past subjunctive form, i.e. the verb takes the ending **–in** after a consonant and **–n(in)** after a vowel, where **–n** seems to be preferred after **–i**, and **–nin** after other vowels.

In the plural, the suffix **–a** is added, just like in the imperative.

In most forms the tone goes on the second to last vowel position, just like in the imperative.

CONJUGATION 1

ha sheégin	don't say	(addressing one person)
ha sheegína	don't say	(addressing several persons)
Conjugation 2		
ha fiirín(in)	don't look	(addressing one person)
ha fiirinína	don't look	(addressing several persons)
ha sameýn(in)	don't make	(addressing one person)
ha sameynína	don't make	(addressing several persons)
Conjugation 3		
ha qaadánin	don't take	(addressing one person)
ha qaadanína	don't take	(addressing several persons)

§ 11.12 Irregular verbs

Somali has six irregular verbs. They are partly inflected through prefixes. The two most irregular verbs are **yahay** *is* and **leeyahay** *has*. The other four are **yaallaa** *lies*, **yaqaannaa** *knows*, **yimaaddaa** *comes*, and **yiraahdaa** *says*.

§ 11.12.1 The inflection of *yahay* 'is'

This verb has no progressive forms.

PRE	SENT	is			REDUCED
	1 sg.	ahay	1 pl.	nahay	all persons
	2 sg.	tahay	2 pl.	tihiin	ah
	3 sg. m.	yahay	3 pl.	yihiin	
	3 sg. f.	t ahay			
	NEGATIVE	isn't			
	1 sg.	má ihi (ahi)	1 pl.	má nihin	
	2 sg.	má tihid	2 pl.	má tihin	
	3 sg.m./f./pl.	má aha			
PAS	Г	was			
	1 sg.	ahaa	1 pl.	ahayn	
	2 sg.	ahay <mark>d</mark>	2 pl.	ahay <mark>deen</mark>	
	3 sg. m.	ahaa	3 pl.	ahaay <mark>een</mark>	
	3 sg. f.	ahay <mark>d</mark>			
	NEGATIVE	wasn't			
	all persons	má ahayn			
INFI	NITIVE	be			
		ahaán			
IMP	ERATIVE	be!			
	2nd sg.	ahów			
	2nd pl.	ahaáda			

Lägg till alla foremr, dvs. konjunktiv och progressiva former av alla oreg. verb, optativ, prohibitiv, negativ, även (waa in uu) ahaadaa, (waa in ay) ahaataa, ha ahaado (madaxweyne), ahaado, ahaato, ahaanno, ahaataan, ahaadaan, se p. 53 So3

All forms that begin with **ah**– as well as all negative forms are contracted with a preceding adjective. Since **ah**– disappears, the reduced present tense form lack any trace of the verb, leaving the adjective on its own.

PRESENT	am/are/is	s small		REDUCED
1 sg.	yar <mark>ahay</mark>	1 pl.	yaryar <mark>nahay</mark>	all persons
2 sg.	yar tahay	2 pl.	yaryar <mark>tihiin</mark>	yar
3 sg. m.	yar <mark>yahay</mark>	3 pl.	yaryar <mark>yihiin</mark>	
3 sg. f.	yar tahay			
NEGATIVE	isn't sma	all		
1 sg.	má yari	1 pl.	má yaryar <mark>in</mark>	
2 sg.	má yar <mark>id</mark>	2 pl.	má yaryar <mark>idin</mark>	
3 sg. m./f.	má yar <mark>a</mark>	3 pl.	má yaryara	
PAST	was/were	e small		
1 sg.	yaraa	1 pl.	yaryar <mark>ayn</mark>	
2 sg.	yarayd	2 pl.	yaryaraydeen	
3 sg. m.	yaraa	3 pl.	yaryaraayeen	
3 sg. f.	yarayd			
NEGATIVE	wasn't			
all persons	má yar <mark>ayn</mark>			
INFINITIVE	be small			
	yaraán			
IMPERATIVE	be small!			
2nd sg.	yarów			
2nd pl.	yaraáda			

Lägg till konjunktiv och progressiva former av alla oreg. verb, optativ, prohibitiv, negativ, noolaan nool yahay noolaadaa nool

ahaadaa, weynaan, weyn yahayweynaadaa, Ha murugeysanaan(in)! , Ma murugeysan-aan , ma weyn-a

The verb **yahay** doesn't have present subjunctive forms in the way regular verbs do. Instead three different forms are used in different functions.

There are special negative forms: **ma ihi, ma tihid, ma aha** etc.

In subclauses, the basic main clause forms are normally used, i.e. **ahay**, **yahay**, **tahay**, **nahay**, **tihiin**, **yihiin**.

Finally, there are subjunctive forms ending in **–o**, which are mainly used in the optative construction, **ha ahaado**, **ha ahaato**..., and after **waa in** *must*, *ought to*.

§ 11.12.1a The use of *yahay* 'is'

(i) If the predicative complement is a noun, no verb is necessary corresponding to English *is/are*. The particle **waa** tells that the clause is a statement.

Aamina waa macallimad. *Amina is a techer.* Gacantu waa wasakh. *The hand is dirty.* the.hand STATEMENT dirty.thing

(ii) If the predicative complement is an adjective the verb **yahay** *is* is used.

Gacántu waa yár tahay. *The hand is small.* hand.the STATEMENT small is

(iii) The reduced verb form **ah**, used with focused subjects, is omitted after an adjective. The symbol **×** is used to represent the omitted verb.

Wáx baa ká maqan ×. thing FOC from missing (is) Something is missing. Eraygeé baa kú habboon × sáwirka? which.word FOC for suitable (is) the.picture Which word is suitable for the picture?

§ 11.12.1b Different equivalents of English 'is'

yahay is (mainly describing some kind of quality)

Gabartaasi waa aqli badan tahay. *That girl is intelliigent.*

Duqsigu wuxuu ka mid yahay cayayaanka yaryar oo duula. *The fly is one of (belongs to) the small flying insects.*

jiraa *exists, dwells, is present*. This verb is mainly used to express the existence of something as opposed to non-existence. A place is often expressed in clauses with this verb. The place is usually expressed without any preposition before the verb.

Itoobiya waxa jira hal milyan oo carruur ah oo cudurka HIV uu agoon ka dhigay. In Ethiopia there is one million children that HIV has caused to become orphans.

The preposition **ku** is however used if the place is some kind of closed spaced or "container".

Nibirigu badweynta buu ku jiraa, xeebtana uma soo dhawaado. *The whale dwells (lives) in the ocean, and it doesn't come close to the coast.* **Doolligu ma ku dhex jiraa baaldiga?** *Is the mouse inside the bucket?*

joogaa *stands, stays, is located, is present.* This verb is mainly used when telling the place where a living being is. It is mostly used without a any preposition.

Libaaxii wuxuu dawacadii weydiiyey xaggee buu joogaa.

The lion asked the fox where it is.

Waxa uu la joogaa ari.

He is (staying) with the goats and sheep. **Macallinku ma hor joogaa sabuuradda?** *Is the teacher standing in front of the blackboard?*

yaallaa *is positioned, lies, is situated.* This verb is mainly used when telling the place where an object is. This verb is mostly used with the preposition

ku to refer to a position inside a room or space, but without a preposition when referring to a position on a surface.

Baaskiilku wuxuu yaallaa dhulka.
The bike is lying on the ground.
Dugsigani waxa uu ku dhex yaallaa kaynta.
This school is situated in the middle of the forest.
Farmasi ma ku yaallaa tuuladiinna?
Is there a pharmacy in your village?

§ 11.12.2 The inflection of *leeyahay* 'has'

This verb has emerged through merger of the adjectival root **leh** *owning*, *having* and the verb **yahay** *is*.

PRES	SENT	has			REDUCED
	1 sg.	leeyahay	1 pl.	leenahay	all persons
	2 sg.	leedahay	2 pl.	leedihiin	leh
	3 sg. m.	leeyahay	3 pl.	leeyihiin	
	3 sg. f.	leedahay			
	NEGATIVE	hasn't			
	1 sg.	má lihi	1 pl.	má lihin	
	2 sg.	má lihid	2 pl.	má lihidin	
	3 sg. m./f./pl.	má	laha		
PAST	Γ	had			
	1 sg.	lahaa	1 pl.	lahayn	
	2 sg.	lahayd	2 pl.	lahaydeen	
	3 sg. m.	lahaa	3 pl.	lahaayeen	
	3 sg. f.	lahayd			
	NEGATIVE	hadn't			
	all persons	má lahayn			
INFI	NITIVE	have			
		lahaán			

§ 11.12.2a Different equivalents of English 'has'

leeyahay – is used to express that you own something or have a relation to something or somebody; you don't need to have it with you.

haystaa – is used to express that you have something with you; you have it, you hold it or you use it, but you are not necessarily the owner of it.

	1 SG.	aallaa	/ aal	
	2 SG.	taallaa	/ taal	
	3 SG.М.	yaallaa	/ yaal	
	3 sg.f.	taallaa	/ taal	
INT	1 pl.	naal <mark>n</mark> aa / naallaa	/ naal	
Present	2 pl.	taallaan	(taalliin)	
$P_{\rm F}$	3 pl.	yaallaan	(yaalliin)	
	1 SG.	aallay	/ iil	/ iillay
	2 sg.	taallay	/ tiil	/ tiillay
	3 sg.m.	yaallay	/ yiil	/ yiillay
	3 sg.f.	taallay	/ tiil	/ tiillay
	1 pl.	naallay / naalnay	/ niil	/ niillay/niilnay
PAST	2 pl.	taalleen	/ tiilleen	
P_{f}	3 pl.	yaalleen	/ yiilleen	
Infi	NITIVE	oolli		
IMPE	ERATIVE	óol, oólla		

§ 11.12.3 The inflection of *yaallaa* 'lies, is'

This verb has no progressive forms

Lägg till konjunktiv.

	1 SG.	aqaannaa	/ aqaan	
	2 SG.	taqaannaa	/ taqaan	
	3 sg.м.	yaqaannaa	/ yaqaan	
	3 sg.f.	taqaannaa	/ taqaan	
ENT	1 pl.	naqaannaa	/ naqaan	
Present	2 pl.	taqaannaan	/ taqaanniin	
$\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{I}}$	3 pl.	yaqaannaan	/ yaqaanniin	
	1 SG.	aqaannay	/ iqiin	/ iqiinnay
	2 SG.	taqaannay	/ tiqiin	/ tiqiinnay
	3 sg.m.	yaqaannay	/ yiqiin	/ yiqiinnay
	3 sg.f.	taqaannay	/ tiqiin	/ tiqiinnay
	1 pl.	naqaannay	/ niqiin	/ niqiinnay
PAST	2 pl.	taqaanneen	/ tiqiinneen	
\mathbf{P}_{ℓ}	3 pl.	yaqaanneen	/ yiqiinneen	
INFI	NITIVE	aqoon		
IMPI	ERATIVE	aqów, aqaád	a	

§ 11.12.4 The inflection of *yaqaannaa* 'knows'

This verb has no progressive forms

Lägg till konjunktiv. ma yaqaanno, ma yaqaan, ma iqiin(in) ?

§ 11.12.5 The inflection of *yimaaddaa* 'comes'

	1 SG.	imaaddaa				
	2 SG.	timaaddaa				
	3 sg.m.	yimaaddaa				
	3 sg.f.	timaaddaa				
LNE	1 pl.	nimaad <mark>n</mark> aa				
PRESENT	2 pl.	timaaddaar	ı			
$\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{F}}$	3 pl.	yimaaddaa	n			
	1 SG.	imid	/ imi	(imaadday)		
	2 SG.	timid	/ timi	(timaadday)		
	3 sg.m.	yimid	/ yimi	(yimaadday)		
	3 sg.f.	timid	/ timi	(timaadday)		
	1 pl.	nimid	/ nimi	(nimaadnay)		
PAST	2 pl.	timaaddeer	ı			
\mathbf{P}_{I}	3 pl.	yimaaddee	n			
IMP	ERATIVE	kaálay, kaaláya ^N				
		imów, imaáda ^s				
INFI	NITIVE	iman ^N / imaan ^S				
Pro	GRESSIVE	imanayaa ^N	/ imaanay	/aa ^s		

Lägg till konjunktiv.

	T			
PRESENT	1 SG.	iraahdaa ^s	/ idhaahdaa ^N	/ dhahaa ^s
	2 SG.	tiraahdaa	/ tidhaahdaa	/ dhahdaa
	3 SG.M.	yiraahdaa	/ yidhaahdaa	/ dhahaa
	3 SG.F.	tiraahdaa	/ tidhaahdaa	/ dhahdaa
	1 pl.	niraah <mark>n</mark> aa	/ nidhaah <mark>n</mark> aa	/ dhahnaa
	2 pl.	tiraahdaan	/ tidhaahdaan	/ dhahdaan
	3 pl.	yiraahdaan	/ yidhaahdaan	/ dhahaan
	1 SG.	iri	/ idhi	/ dhahay
	2 SG.	tiri	/ tidhi	/ dhahday
AST	3 sg.m.	yiri	/ yidhi	/ dhahay
	3 sg.f.	tiri	/ tidhi	/ dhahday
Ъ	1 PL.	niri	/ nidhi	/ dhahnay
	2 pl.	tiraahdeen	/ tidhaahdeen	/ dhahdeen
	3 pl.	yiraahdeen	/ yidhaadheen	/ dhaheen
IMPERATIVE				dheh, dhaha
INFINITIVE		oran	/ odhan	/ dhihi
PROGRESSIVE		oranayaa	/ odhanayaa	/ dhahayaa

§ 11.12.6 The inflection of *yiraahdaa* 'says'

<mark>Lägg till konjunktiv.</mark>

§ 11.13 Formation of verbs

A verb and a noun often have exactly the same stem. It is then difficult to says which is derived from the other.

beér -ta field, plantation	beeraa, beertaa plants, grows
ciyaár -ta play, game, dance	ciyaaraa, ciyaartaa plays, dances
heés -ta song	heesaa, heestaa <i>sings</i>
sháah -a tea	shaahaa drinks tea, has tea
tártan -ka competition	tartamaa, tartantaa competes
weerar -ka attack	weeraraa, weerartaa attacks

§ 11.13.1 Verbs in *–iyaa* derived from nouns

kulayl heat	kulayliyaa, kulaylisaa heats something
qabow cold	qaboojiyaa, qaboojisaa cools something
nadiíf clean thing	nadiifiyaa, nadiifisaa cleans something

§ 11.13.2 Verbs in *–oobaa* derived from nouns

biyo water	biyoobaa, biyowdaa becomes water, melts
wasakh dirt, filth	wasakhoobaa, wasakhowdaa becomes dirty

§ 11.13.3 Verbs in *–aadaa* derived from adjectives

This is a very common suffix that can be added to practically all adjectives.

kulul warm, hot kululaadaa, kululaataa becomes warm

§ 11.13.4 Verbs in *–eeyaa* derived from adj. or nouns

These verbs are derived both from adjectives and from nouns denoting qaulitites. They denote an action that makes the object of the verb gain the quality in question.

kulul heat	kululeeyaa, kululaysaa sb. heats sth.
fudud easy	fududeeyaa, fududaysaa sb. makes sth. easy, simplifies

yar smallyareeyaa, yaraysaa sb. makes sth. small, reduceswasakh dirt, filthwasakheeyaa, wasakhaysaa sb. akes sth. dirty, pollutes

§ 11.13.5 Verbs in *–iyaa* derived from other verbs

These verbs are causatives. They typically express that a person makes something happen or that one person makes somebody else do something.

aadaa, aaddaa	aaddiyaa, aaddisaa
sb. goes, sb. sets off	sb. makes sb./sth. go/move somewhere
	= sb. leads/takes sb./sth. somewhere
buuxaa, buuxdaa	buuxiyaa, buuxisaa
sth. is full	sb. makes sth. become full
	= sb. fills sth.
<mark>guuraa, guurtaa</mark>	guuriyaa, guurisaa
sth. moves	sb. makes sth. move
	= sb. copies sth.
karaa, kartaa	kariyaa, karisaa
karaa, kartaa sth. boils	kariyaa, karisaa sb. makes sth. boil
	•
sth. boils	sb. makes sth. boil
sth. boils	sb. makes sth. boil = sb. boils/cooks sth.
sth. boils qalloocaa, qalloocda	sb. makes sth. boil = sb. boils/cooks sth. aa qalloociyaa, qalloocisaa
sth. boils qalloocaa, qalloocda	sb. makes sth. boil = sb. boils/cooks sth. aa qalloociyaa, qalloocisaa sb. makes sth. bent
sth. boils qalloocaa, qalloocd a sth. is bent, curved	sb. makes sth. boil = sb. boils/cooks sth. aa qalloociyaa, qalloocisaa sb. makes sth. bent = sb. bends sth.
sth. boils qalloocaa, qalloocda sth. is bent, curved uraa, urtaa	sb. makes sth. boil = sb. boils/cooks sth. aa qalloociyaa, qalloocisaa sb. makes sth. bent = sb. bends sth. uriyaa, urisaa

Notice that the /i/ of the suffix influences an /a/ in the root of certain verbs.

If the root ends in /x/, /c/ or /'/, the /a/ tends to change to /i/.

b <mark>ax</mark> aa, baxdaa	b <mark>ix</mark> iyaa, bixisaa
sb./sth. comes out	sb. makes sth. come out
	<i>= sb. takes out sth.</i>

If the root ends in another consonant, the /a/ tends to change to /e/.

galaa, gashaa	g <mark>el</mark> iyaa, gelisaa
sb. enters	sb. makes sb./sth. enter, go in
	= sb. inserts sth.

/g/ and/q/ change into /j/ before the causative suffix /i/.

daaqaa, daaqdaa	daajiyaa, daajisaa
sth. eats grass, grazes	sb. makes sth. east grass, graze
	sb. pastures sth.
joogaa, joogtaa	joojiyaa, joojisaa
sb./sth. stands, stops	sb. makes sb./sth. stand, stop
	= sb. stops sb./sth.
muuqdaa, muuqataa	muujiyaa, muujisaa

1 / 1	, ,
sth. appears,	sb. makes sth. appear, be seen
sth. can be seen	= sb. shows sth.

In a few verbs also /l/ changes into /j/ before causative /i/.

qallalaa, qallashaa	qallajiyaa, qallajisaa
sth. dries,	sb. makes sth. become dry
sth. becomes dry	= sb. dries sth.

§ 11.13.6 Verbs in *–siiyaa*

These verbs are also causatives. They are formed through the addition of the simple verb **siiyaa** *gives* and they express that a person carries out some action that has an impact on another person or an object.

faham –ka	fahamsiiyaa, fahamsiisaa
understanding	sb. makes sb. understand sth., sb. explains sth. to sb.
dareen –ka	dareensiiyaa, dareensiisaa
feeling	sb. makes sb. else feel sth.
socod –ka	socodsiiyaa, socodsiisaa
motion	sb. puts sth. in motion

§ 11.13.7 Verbs in *-sadaa* derived from other verbs

These verbs usually express an action that is somehow beneficial to the person who is carrying it out.

kariyaa, karisaa boils, cooks (food) karsadaa, karsataa cooks for oneself joogaa, joogtaa is situated, stands joogsadaa, joogsataa stops fiiriyaa, fiirisaa looks at X u fiirsadaa, fiirsataa observes X

An /l/ in the root merges with the /s/ and gives /sh/.

kaaliyaa, kaalisaa supports, helps kaashadaa, kaashataa gets support, gets help

Somalis often has a pair of verb with a ordinary verb and an **autobenefactive** verb. The **autobenefactive** verb expresses that you are doing something for your own benefit. The autobenefactive verb contains an additional **-t-** or **-d-**. If the ordinary form already has a -t- or -d-, the autobenefactive verb has **-at-**.

The ordinary verbThe autobenefactive verb(1st group/conjugation)(3rd group/conjugation)

waan / wuu dhisaa waan / wuu dhistaa waad / way dhistaa waad / way dhisataa

waan dhisnaa	waan dhisannaa
waad dhistaan	waad dhisataan
way dhisaan	way dhistaan

§ 12. Phrases & Word Order

A simple Somali clause consists of three types of phrases:

- NOUN PHRASES,
- A PARTICLE PHRASE,
- A VERB PHRASE.

The order of the phrases is quite flexible.

Only the position of the particle phrase is restricted to somehwere before the verb phrase.

The word order within phrases is fixed.

Often there is only one distinct high tone per phrase, namely the first one, and the following potential high tones are pronounced less distinctly.

§ 12.1 The Noun Phrase

In Somali the head noun is always the first word of the noun phrase. Determiners and modifiers always follow the head noun. This means that an adjective follows after its noun.

The end of a noun phrase is often marked by a high tone, but doing so is not obligatory. Often, there is only one distinct high tone per noun phrase, while other "potential" high tones are not realised distinctly.

bisádda yár	or bisádda yar	the little cat
subáx wanaagsán!	or subáx wanaagsan!	good morning!
sheekó gaabán	or sheekó gaaban	a short story

§ 12.1.1 Nouns without a context

When a nound ending in **-o**/**-a**/**-e** is used on its own, out of context, not as part of any phrase or clause, most speakers pronounce a high tone on the second to last vowel position. Otherwise they usually pronounce it on the last vowel position.

magaálo	a city
magaaló wéyn	a big city
báre	a teacher
baré wanaagsan	a good teacher

§ 12.1.2 Nouns as modifiers

Modifiers follow after the noun that they modify.

(a) In Somali the owner of an object may simply be placed after the owned object. The owned object is generally in the definite form.

The end of the noun phrase is often marked by a high tone on the final vowel position of the modifier, but they may also be pronounced without any distinct high tone.

dúgsiga Sahrá or dúgsiga Sahra Sahra's school

For masculine modifier nouns this generally means that their high tone is shifted from the second to last vowel position, or that they are pronounced without any distinct high tone at all.

Áxmed		Ahmed
gúriga Axméd	or gúriga Axmed	Ahmed's house

(b) Women's names that do not end in **-o/-a** often have their high tone on the second last vowel position. Such an "irregular" feminie tone generally remains unchanged also as a modfier.

dukáanka Máryan Maryan's shop

(c) If the owner is in the definite form, the high tone remains in its original position, but sometimes an additional high tone may be heard at the end of the phrase.

baabúurka macállinka ~ baabúurka macállinká the teacher's car

(d) Also other types of phrases where one noun functions as a determiner of another noun have the same sturcture and word order. In the vast majority of cases both nouns occur in their definite form.

khatárta jídka	the danger of the road
dhakhtárka ilkáha	<i>dentist</i> (lit. <i>the doctor</i> (<i>of</i>) <i>the teeth</i>)

(e) Possession may also be expressed through another construction, where the owner is mentioned first, followed by the possessed object which then needs to have a possessive ending added to it.

Áxmed gúrigiisa	Ahmed's house (lit. Ahmed his.house)
or gúriga Axmed	Ahmed's house (lit. the.house (of) Ahmed)

(f) When the construction describes a close family or friend relation, only the construction with the possessive ending can be used.

§ 12.1.3 Several nouns in a row

When one noun after the other modify the immediately preceding noun the result sometimes becomes a quite long phrase.

ilaalínta nadaafádda iláha biyáha

the protection of the hygiene of the sources of the water protecting the hygiene of the water sources

In principle, such phrases can be translated into English by inserting *of* between the nouns, but other solutions are often more elegant.

You cannot have two modifying words referring back to the SAME noun without using **ee/oo**. But you can have a long row of nouns, if each noun modifies the immediately preceding noun. Sometimes we can find contrasting examples of different meanings with and without the conjuntion:

Xarunta Dhaqanka Hargeysa *the center of the culture of Hargeysa*, which would be an institution dealing with the culture that is typical of Hargeysa, i.e Hargeysa is a modifier or Dhaqanka

Xarunta Dhaqanka ee Hargeysa the Hargeysa center of culture, which would be an institution dealing with culture in general and situated in Hargeysa, i.e. Hargeysa is a modifier of Xarunta

§ 12.1.4 Modifier phrases with *ah* 'being'

Somali doesn't have as many adjectives as English. Instead, nouns are often qualitatively modified by other nouns. The two nouns are then usually connected through the reduced verb form **ah** *being*.

nín Soomaáli ah a Somali man, a Somali a.man a.Somali being gabár dhallinyaró ah a teenage girl, a teenager a.girl youth being shaáti bulúug ah a blue shirt a.shirt a.blue.thing being

§ 12.1.5 Modifier phrases with *leh* 'having; with'

Another common way of connecting a modifier noun to a head noun is the reduced verb form **leh** *having*, which often may also be successfully translated as *with*.

surwáal mídabka dambáska leh grey trousers, ash coloured trousers trousers the colour the ash having qadó hílib badán leh a lunch with a lot of meat a.lunch meat much having

§ 12.1.6 Modifier phrases with *badan* 'much'

Yet another common way of constructing a qualitative modifier phrase is to use the adjective **badán** *much* as connector.

baaskíil qurúx badan¹⁸ *a beautiful bike (a bicycle of great beauty)* a.bicycle beauty much

¹⁸ There is an interesting structural similarity between **beauty-full** and **qurúx badan**.

§ 12.1.7 Agreement in definiteness

When a noun is used as a modifier of another noun, also when connected through, e.g., **ah** *being*, *that is*, **leh** *having*, *that has*, *with* or **badán** *much*, both nouns in the phrase must be either indefinite or definite. In other words the two nouns agree in definiteness.

maalínta Jimcáha ah (on) Friday (lit. (on) the day that is the Friday)
nín Soomaáli ah a Somali man (lit. a man that is a Somali)
nínka Soomaáliga ah the Somali man (lit. the man that is the Somali)
baaskíilka qurúxda badan the beautiful bicycle

§ 12.1.8 Noun phrases expressing amount

Since the Somali numbers are nouns they constitute the head noun of phrases expressing amounts. Therefore any suffixes are added to the numeric noun, not to the following "counted" noun. Which is in the counting form (see § 6.7)

labádaas reer	those two families
sáddex <mark>dayda</mark> buug	my three books

§ 12.1.9 Counting uncountable nouns

(a) Nouns are generally divided into COUNTABLE and UNCOUNTABLE nouns, depending on whether they may form a plural or not. In languages in general, numbers tend to be used only before countable nouns. That is basically the situation also in Somali, but since the numerals are nouns in Somali, their meaning is rather something like **lába** *two items*, **sáddex** *three items*... Therefore they can actually be used also with uncountable nouns that express collections of individually discernible objects, e.g. **nácnac** *candy, sweets,* **carruúr** *children* or **múus** *bananas*. However, the numeral must be connected to the following noun thorugh the reduced verb form **ah** *being* that is added after the noun representing the counted objects.

toddobá nácnac ah seven candies (eg. seven items that are candy) **sáddex carruúr ah** three children (eg. three items that are children)

(b) The same is true for the question word *immisa?* how many?, how much?

ímmisa múus ah? *how many bananas?* how.many.items banana(s) being

(c) It is also common to add a noun that is typically used for counting the kind of objects in question. A very general such word is **xábbo** *seed* which is used similarly to English *pieces, units* before a great variety of words.

sáddex <mark>xabbó</mark> oo múus ah	three bananas
three.items units and banana(s) being	
áfar <mark>kiiloo</mark> oo hílib ah	four kilos of meat
four.items kilo and meat being	

Since the head noun **sáddex**/**áfar** now have two modifiers after each other, the connector **oo** has to be added between the two modifiers. See § 12.1.10.

(d) Also when some kind of measure precedes a noun denoting a substance, the substance is followed by the reduced verb form **ah** *being*.

xabbád harúur aha seed of sorghuma.seedsorghum being

§ 12.1.10 More than one modifier

If a head noun has more than one mofidier, a connector word has to be inserted between the modifiers. For the use of connectors before relative clauses, see § 15.3.2 and § 15.3.3.

If the head noun is indefinite, the conjunction **oo** *and* is used between the modifiers.

úbax wéyn oo qurúx badan a big and beautiful flower

Numerals are nouns and that they function as the head of their noun phrase.

labá gabdhood oo walaaló ahtwo sisters (lit. two girl siblings)two.itemsgirlsand siblings beingsáddex wiil oo walaaló ahthree brothers (lit. three boy siblings)three.itemsboys and siblings beinglabá waxtar oo kaletwo other benefitstwo.itemsbenefits and othersáddex kun oo qofthree thousand peoplethree.itemsthousand and person

If the head noun is definite, the conjunction **ee** is used between the modifiers.

dúgsiga <u>hoose</u> ee <u>Shéekh Bashiir</u> Sheikh Bashir's primary school macállinka <u>af-Soomaáliga</u> ee <u>Xasan</u> Hassan's teacher of Somali dhárka <u>dúgsiga</u> ee <u>Xasan</u> Hassan's clothes for school magacyada <u>kala duwan</u> ee <u>qaybaha jirkeenna</u> the different names of the parts of our body

ee is used to define, **oo** is used to describe. If the second modifier expresses a quality that is crucial for identifying the head noun among other similar objects, then the connector **ee** *but (more specifically)* is used instead of **oo** *and*. This is especially true when it comes to expressing ownership or other kinds of belonging or association.

Sheeg ilaha biyaha ee aad ku aragto sawirrada. Tell the sources of water that you can see in the pictures.

The head noun is 'ilaha' and it is followed by two modifiers 'biyaha' and 'aad ku aragto sawirradda'. Therefore a conjuntion is needed, and 'ee' is a good choice since the relative clause is primarily 'defining' which sources, not 'describing' them.

If we got rid of the modifier 'biyaha', then the conjunction is no longer needed.

Sheeg ilaha aad ku aragto sawirrada. *Tell the sources that you can see in the pictures.*

§ 12.1.11 Relative clauses as modifiers

Cf 15.3.2 and 15.3.3. Also a relative clause that carries information necessary in order to identify the object it refers to is preceded by the connector **ee** *"specifically"*.

Maxáa uu ahaa <u>dhárka</u> cusub <mark>ee Faadumó loó iibiyay?</mark> What were the <u>new clothes</u> that <u>they bought for Faduma</u>?

Without the relative clause it would be impossible to tell what new clothes are meant in a family where all the children have been given new clothes. Therefore, under the circumstances, the relative clause is essential.

After an indefinite head noun, the second modifier, i.e. the relative clause, is preceded by the conjunction **oo** and.

Shéeg magacyáda <u>labá</u> ciidood <mark>oo Isláamku léeyahay</mark>.

Say the names of two feasts that Islam has.

Qór <u>labá waxtar oo kale oo uu dábku léeyahay</u>.

Write two other benefits that fire has.

§ 12.1.12 The phrase ká mid ah

The equivalent of the English preposition *of* expressing a selection within a set is commonly rendered by the Somali phrase **ká mid ah** *being one of*.

Qór sáddex ká mid ah iláha biyáha.

Write three **of** the sources of water. (*i.e.* three **that are one of** the sources of water.) **maalín maalmáha ká mid ah** one day which is one of the days one day of the days = one of those days

This construction is necessary since Somali prepositions may not connect two nouns. A verb must always be involved.

§ 12.1.13 Adjectives after –kii/–tii

After nouns with the demonstrative endings **-kii/-tii** (expressing that something is expected to be previously know) adjectives must be followed by the reduced past tense form **ahaa** (m. & pl.) or **ahayd** (f.sg.) *that was*. These forms are obligatorily contracted with the preceding adjective as **-aa/-ayd**, since the root **ah**- disappears after adjectives.

digaagáddii yarayd rootigii fiicnaa wíilkeedii yaraa gabádhiisii weynayd that hen (you know) that was little that bread (you know) that was good her son/boy (you know) that was little his daguhter/girl (you know) that was big

Of course, in most instances it would be more idiomatic to just translate these phrases as *the little hen, the good bread, her little son, his big daughter*.

§ 12.1.14 Prepositions before verbal nouns

An important exception to the principle that prepositions can't precede a noun concerns verbal nouns, mainly those in **–id**, **–n** and **–asho**. Such Somali verbal nouns can often be translated into English as *to* + infinitive.

ka ilaalínta wasákhda jírka to protect the body against dirtiness

Such prepositions do not have a high tone since they actually serve as a prefix in a derived, complex noun. Therefore the prepositon is sometimes also written together with the verbal noun, but usually it is not.

§ 12.1.15 The Particle –ba

The particle **–ba** has a reinforcing function. The most idiomatic translations may vary quite a bit. In affirmative declarative clauses it may correspond to *also*, *all*, *every*.

"Má rabno," ayey sáddexduba kú jawaabeen.

"We don't want to," *all three* replied to her

§ 12.2 The Verb Phrase

The verb phrase constitutes the predicate part of a clause. Besides the finite verb also the following words are maximally included in the verb phrase:

- 1. the indefinite subject pronoun la one/you/they;
- 2. one of the object pronouns
- i me, ku you (SG), na us (EXCL), ina us (INCL), idin you (PL), is oneself;
- 3. the preposition **ú** *to/for, in* (a manner);
- 4. the preposition **kú** *in/on/at*, *with* (a tool);
- 5. the preposition ká from/of, about (a topic), than;
- 6. the preposition lá (together) with;
- 7a. the negation má not;
- 7b. a short subject pronoun (in a particle phrase with the negation);
- 8. a second object pronoun

kay me, kaa you (SG), kayo us (EXCL), keen us (INCL), kiin you (PL);

- 9. a viewpoint particle **soo** here (there), **sii** away;
- 10. a distribution particle kala apart, wada together;
- 11. a position particle

ag near, dhex between, dul above, hoos under, hor before, in front, kor above...;

- 12. an adjective as a predicative complement;
- 13. one or two verbs in the infinitive;
- 14. a verb inflected for person/tense/mood.

The word order within the verb phrase is fixed according to the above list.

The elements 1–7a are obligatorily contracted into one word. In these contractions certain sound changes occur. See § 5.2.

The viewpoint and distribution particles have a concrete basic meaning, but in many instances they are also used with a more abstract meaning. See § 12.2.4 and § 12.2.5.

§ 12.2.1 Prepositions

Somali and English prepositions are not used in the same way, but they still have very much in common. The difference is that English has a large number of prepositions, and they are mainly used before nouns, whereas Somali has only four genuine prepositions, expressing four very basic meanings, and these four prepositions must be placed in the predicate phrase, normally before a verb or an adjective. They indicate the kind of relation that holds between this verb or adjective and a noun or noun phrase. This makes perfect sense, since prepositions serve to connect two other words and express their relation to each other. To put the preposition before one of those words (the noun) in English really isn't more "natural" than to put it before the other word (the verb) in Somali.

Sometimes something similar actually happens in other languages, e.g. in Swedish.

Jag pekade redan tidigt **på** problemet. I pointed already early at the.problem. ≈ Jag **på**pekade redan tidigt problemet. *Already early on, I pointed out the problem.*

Man tog alla privilegier från generalen. one took all privileges from the.general ≈ Man fråntog generalen alla privilegier.

All privileges were taken away from the general.

The Somali prepositions are always part of the predicate/verb phrase, and from that position they point to one of the noun phrases in the clause. It is however only the context that makes clear which noun (phrase) a specific prepositions is referring to. Grammar gives no clues at all.



We get water *from* many places. / We find water *in* many places.



In the homes we eat different (kinds of) food.

§ 12.2.2 Object pronoun + preposition

An object pronoun and a following preposition are not always semantically related, even though they merge into one word. The preposition may refer to a noun phrase elsewhere in the sentence.

Digaagáddii waxa ay iská dhex aragtay biyíhii.

the.hen.you.know FOC it itself.from middle saw the.water.you.know *The hen saw itself down in the water.*

Iskú qalláji shukumáan nadíif ah.

oneself.with dry towel clean.thing being Dry yourself with a clean towel.

§ 12.2.3 The negation má

The negation **má** comes directly after possibile object pronouns and prepositions, and they all merge into one word.

```
Igamá dul boódi kartid. (< i + ka + ma)
```

You can not jump over me.

§ 12.2.4 Viewpoint particles

The basic function of the particle **soó** is to express a motion towards the place where the subject of the clause is located.

Examples

The basic function of the particle **sií** is to express a motion away from the place where the subject of the clause is located.

Examples

This motion is not always concrete. It may also refer to time and other phenomena that in an abstract way may be perceived as moving closer or moving away, e.g. the expression **soó socdá** *coming*, *following*, *next*.

Ku qor erayada soo socda buuggaaga layliga.

Write the following words in your exercise book.

The particle **soó** is often also used to express the **completion** of an action.

Laakiin dhulkii ayaa uu ka soo bixin waayey. But he failed to make it come out of THE GROUND.

Immisa kalluun ayey soo dabteen? How many fish did they catch?

In a similar way, the particle **sií** is used to express **continuation**.

Ú shéeg fásalka wáxa aad kú sií aragtay waddáda. *Tell the class the things you saw (went on seeing) along the road.*

§ 12.2.5 Distribution particles

<mark>kala, wada</mark>

Examples

§ 12.2.6 Position particles

A dozen nouns or so have developed into particles that can occur in the verb phrase in order to describe the place or position where the action is carried out.

dul surface, top	dul taallaa <i>lies on top (of something)</i>
<mark>Examples</mark>	

§ 12.3 The Particle Phrase

Every simple Somali clause contains a special word that determines which kind of clause it is, e.g. statement, question, request, wish or possibility,

and also if the clause is affirmative or negative. These little words are called **SENTENCE PARTICLES**. Together with a subject pronoun they constitute the paticle phrase.

The particle phrase can maximally contain

- a particle expressing the TYPE of clause or the FOCUS of the clause
- **a** short clitic **pronoun** that expresses the SUBJECT of the clause.

§ 12.3.1 Sentence particles

(a) Sentence particles expressing TYPE OF CLAUSE:

waa/wáa	expresses	that	the	clause	is an	affirmative	statement	or a
	question w	rith a	que	estion w	vord.			

This particle has a high tone only if the following word doesn't. It is toneless if the following word has a high tone.

- má expresses that the clause is a negative statement.In this type of clause the verb is in the subjunctive form.This particle always has a high tone.
- ma/má expresses that the clause is a qustion that requires yes/no as the answer.This particle has a high tone only if the following word

doesn't. It is toneless if the following word has a high tone.

- ✗ The lack of any particle expresses that the clause is a command or request. The verbet is in the imperative form.
- ha expresses warnings and prohibitions.This particle is always toneless.
- há expresses wishes and indirect commands in the 3rd person.This particle always has a high tone.

(b) Sentence particles expressing FOCUS:

Focus is an important function expressed by three different sentence particles. Focus means that a word or a phrase is foregrounded or emphasised. In English that is most often achieved by pronouncing focused words with extra energy or prominence. In Somali, focus is not expressed with the voice, but through three special function words, called FOCUS PARTICLES.

- **ayáa / báa** express that the noun phrase immediately preceding the particle is focused. **Ayaa** and **baa** are synonymous and mutually exchangeable, even though **ayaa** is often perceived as a bit more formal, and **baa** as slightly more colloquial.
- wáxa / waxáa express that the noun phrase at the end of the clause is focused.

It depends on the context: which word would you give slightly more emphasis in English?

Sahra **waxa** ay salaamaysaa **saaxiibkeed / saaxiibteed**. Sahra is greeting her FRIEND.

Sahra baa salaamaysa saaxiibkeed / saaxiibteed. SAHRA is greeting her friend.

The focus particle **báa** or **ayáa** is optional after the interrogative suffix **–eé**. One could say that the suffix **–eé** itself is able to expresses focus.

Example

§ 12.3.2 Short subject pronouns

The following subject pronouns occur in the particle phrase. See § 9.2.

aan	I / we
aad	уои
uu	he / it
ay	she / it / they
aannu	we (excluding you)
aynu	we (including you)
aydin	you (pl.)

NB!

La one occurs at the beginning of the verb phrase.

§ 12.3.3 Obligatory subject pronouns

In declarative clauses there is normally a short subject pronoun. The short subject pronoun has to be used even if there is another, long subject pronoun in the clause.

Anigu waa aan weyn ahay, adiguna waa aad yar tahay.

I am big and you are little.

§ 12.3.4 Omission of the short subject pronoun

(a) If the subject of the clause is focused short subject pronouns are never used.

Warsame geed baa uu beeray. <u>Naasir baa</u> geedkii waraabiyay. Warsame planted a TREE. NAASIR watered the tree.

(b) In questions and negative clauses, the short subject pronouns are optional.

Example

(c) If the predicate contains no verb, i.e. only a noun phrase, short subject pronouns are never used.

Sáhro waa macallimád. Sahra is a teacher.

(d) In clauses with the particle **waa** the 3rd person short subject pronouns **uu** *he, it* and **ay** *she, it, they* are often omitted if the predicate consists of an adjective + the verb **yahay/tahay/yihiin** *is, are*.

```
Gabádhu waa (ay) wéyn tahay.

The girl is big.

Dukáanku waa (uu) yár yahay.

The shop is small.
```

(e) Also in other clauses with the particle **waa**, the 3rd person short subject pronouns are sometimes omitted, thus putting more emphasis on the verb itself.

Walaalkay waa joogay.	Walaalkay waa uu joogay.	
my.brother DECL was.present	my.brother DECL he was.present	
My brother WAS there.	My brother was there.	
Baskii waa yimid.	Baskii waa uu yimid.	
The bus has ARRIVED.	The bus has arrived.	

(f) The short subject pronouns are also optional whenever a subject noun phrase occurs between the particle phrase and the verb phrase.

Example

§ 13. Simple clauses

A Somali simple clause or main clause normally contains a particle phrase and a verb phrase. The particle phrase <u>always</u> precedes the verb phrase.

Wáa uu yimid. He has arrived.

One or more noun phrases may occur anywhere in the clause, sometimes also between the particle phrase and the verb phrase.

Besides the fact that the particle phrase always precedes the verb phrase, there are no simple rules for the order of the phrases in a clause. The order depends on how one chooses to structure and present the information. It is common to start with facts that are already familiar and finish with new information.

§ 13.1 Sentence Constituents

(a) A declarative clause with <u>no focused</u> noun or noun phrase must contain the particle **waa**. Normally, there is also a short subject pronoun. This particle phrase normally goes right before the verb phrase.

Ardaýdu waa ay akhrínayaan. The students are reading.

(b) A declarative clause <u>with focus</u> on one of the noun phrases contains one of the three focus particles **baa**, **ayaa** or **waxa(a)**.

If the focused noun phrase goes <u>before the verb phrase</u> **baa** or **ayáa** is used and the particle occurs immediately after the focused noun phrase.

<u>Rooti iyo caano</u> baa uu rabaa. *He wants <u>bread and milk</u>.* **Cuntadu <u>xoog</u> baa ay inoo yeeshaa.** *The food generates <u>energy</u> for us.* If the focused noun phrase occurs <u>at the end of the clause</u>, the particle **wáxa/waxáa**¹⁹ is used and the particle phrase occurs before the verb phrase.

Najmawaxa ayleedahaybuug.Najma has <u>A BOOK.</u>Najmathe.thing she hasbookWaxa uurabaarooti iyo caano.He wants BREAD AND MILK.the.thing hewantsbread and milk

The focus particle frequently refers to a whole subordinate clause.

Cali wáxa uu rabaa <u>ín uu fuuló baaskíilka</u>. *Ali wants to RIDE THE BIKE.* Ali the.thing he wants that he rides the.bike

§ 13.1.1 Subjects

In clauses where the subject is not focused, it has to be grammatically marked with a subject ending. It is only the last word in the subject noun phrase that is marked.

If the subject is not focused there is normally also a short subject pronoun in the particle phrase.

The last word of the subject noun phrase is marked by tone and/or the endings **–u**, **–i**, **–aa** in the following ways.

(a) In pronouns and noun suffixes a final –a is replaced by –u.

Wíilku waa macállin. The boy is a teacher.
Mágacaygu waa Sahrá. My name is Sahra.
Wíilkaygu waa macállin. My son is a teacher.
Hooyáda reérku waa Cambará. The mother of the family is Ambara.

Notice that nouns with a base form in **-aha** have a subject form in **-uhu**.

Gabdhuhu waa carruurtayda. *The girls are my children*.

¹⁹ This particle has developed from the word **wax** *thing*.

(b) The high tone is missing on the last (or only) morpheme of the subject.

Axmed wúu hurdaa. Ahmed sleeps.

(c) Adjectives take the ending –i. Also, the high tone on the adjective's stem disappears, as stated in (b) above.

Bisádda yari wáxa ay raadínaysaa hooyádeed.

The little cat is looking for its mother.

However, derived adjectives ending in **–aad**, **–eed**, **-ood** or **–e** do not take any subject ending.

Example

(d) Pronouns and corresponding suffixes, not ending in -a, take the ending -i. A high tone on the morpheme preceding -i usually disappears.

Tani waa káb.	This is a shoe.
Kani waa bás.	This is a bus.
Báskani waa wéyn yahay.	This bus is big.

(e) Verb forms not inflected for person and ending in a consonant (**ah** *being*, **leh** *having*, and reduced subjunctive forms) take the suffix –**i**.

Sideé bay dádka tuulo-jóogga ahi ú nadiifiyaan iláha biyáhooda? *How do people who live in the village keep their water sources clean?*

(f) Feminine nouns with an indefinite form that ends in a consonant often take the ending–i, especially in a more formal style.

Maalín maalmáha ká mid ah ayáa bisadi gúrigeedii ká tagtay. On one of those days a cat set out from home.

With proper nouns this ending is less frequent than with common nouns.

It may also occur with names ending in a vowel.

Hargeysi, Soomaaliyi, Sahri etc.

(g) Verb forms ending in a short **–***a*/**–***o* take the long vowel ending **–***aa*.

Wiilka jiif<u>aa</u> wuu bukaa. The boy that is lying down is ill. Sideé baa ay dádka sawirráda ká muuqd<u>aa</u> ú isticmaalaan biyáha? *How do the people showing in the pictures use the water?*

Cf. not as the subject: **wiilka jiif<u>a</u>** the boy that is lying down **dádka sawirráda ká muuqd**<u>á</u> the people showing in the pictures

(h) Also in the adjective kasta *each*, *every* the final vowel becomes –aa.

Qol kastaa wuxuu leeyahay dariishado waaweyn. (as subject) *Every room has BIG WINDOWS.*

cf. **Hawadu waxa ay joogtaa meel kast<u>a</u>.** (as adverbial) *The air is EVERYWHERE.*

(i) Short possessive endings take over the high tone from the preceding morpheme, hence these endings are not affected by the rule in (b) above.

Hooyadaý waa macallimád. *My mother is a teacher.* cf. non-subject: **Tani waa hooyáday.** *This is my mother.*

§ 13.1.2 Predicate Agreement

If a clause contains a subject noun phrase, the short subject pronoun and the predicate verb must agree with it in grammatical number, and in the singular also in gender. In some cases, however, there is a discrepancy between the subject's grammatical form and its meaning. The most common case are collective nouns which grammatically are singular, but have a "plural" meaning, e.g. **carruur** *children*, **dumar** *women*, **qoys** *family* etc. The verb and the short subject pronoun, which are always in the same form, may then be in the singular or in the plural. In the following example, the subject is a feminine singular collective noun, followed by a plural subject pronoun and verb in the first clause, and by a feminine singular subject pronoun and verb in the second clause.

Carruúrtu waxa ay aádayaan gúriga adeérkood. *The children are going to THEIR UNCLE'S HOUSE.*

Carruúrtaydu áad baa ay ú fiicán tahay.

My children are VERY good.

There are also instances where a word's grammatical gender and biological sex do not coincide, e.g. **xaas** (m.) *wife*, **sac** (m.) *cow*. If the noun denotes a human being, the biological sex generally determines the form of the short subject pronoun and the verb, whereas if the noun denotes an animal, the word's grammatical gender generally takes precedence.

Xáaskiisu wáxa ay karínaysay cuntó. His wife was cooking FOOD. <mark>Sácu waxa uu ká mid yahay xayawáanka naásleyda ah.</mark> The cow belongs to THE MAMMALS.

In clauses with the focus particle **waxa** where the subject comes after the verb, the verb may agree with either the real subject or with the focus particle **waxa** which is originally a definite masculine noun meaning *the thing*.

Waxa ka muuqda wasakh.

It looks dirty. (lit. *Dirt can be seen from it*.) Qoyskeenna waxa ka dhexeeya shaqada gurigeenna. Qoyskeenna waxa ka dhexeeysa shaqada gurigeenna.

§ 13.1.3 Focused subjects

If the subject noun phrase of a clause is focused,

- 1) the subject phrase is not marked with a subject ending,
- 2) there is no short subject pronoun,
- 3) the predicate verb appears in the reduced form (see § 11.9).

Cáli ⇔ baa ⇔ akhrínaya.

ALI is reading. It's ALI who is reading.

Cali 🗇 waa uu 🗇 akhrínayaa.

Ali is reading.

```
Saaxíibkiis ⇔ baa ⇔ kú riíxaya ⇔ baaskíilka.
HIS FRIEND pushes the bike.
Saaxiibkiís ⇔ wáxa uu ⇔ kú riíxayaa ⇔ baaskíilka.
His friend pushes THE BIKE.
```

```
Aníga ⇔ ayáa ⇔ raba.
I want to.
Anígu ⇔ wáa aan ⇔ rabaa.
I want to (do it).
```

A focused subject may also occur at the end of the clause. It is then focused with the particle **waxa(a)**. Such clauses are often translated in the passive.

Baaskiilka <> waxaa <> kú riíxaya <> saaxiibkiis.

The bike is pushed by HIS FRIEND.

Daaqadáha 🗇 waxa 🗇 kú jira 🗢 muraayadó.

In the windows there are PANES.

§ 13.1.4 Objects

In Somali there is no formal difference between object noun phrases and adverbial noun phrases. If one still wishes to make this distinction, it has to be based on either the meaning of the phrases or the presence of an associated preposition in the verb phrase. Noun phrases that are associated with a preposition may then be regarded as adverbial phrases, whereas noun phrases that are directly associated with the verb, without a preposition, are considered object noun phrases.

§ 13.1.4a Two objects

A few Somali verbs take two objects without any preposition. Such objects are traditionally often referred to as direct and indirect objects.

Hooyádu dériska ayaa ay siínaysaa hílib. Mother is giving the NEIGHBOURS meat. Hoóyo wax má ku weydiisay?

Did mother ask you something? **Maxamed carruúrta waxa uu siínayaa lacág.** Mahamed is giving the children MONEY.

Other such verbs are **tusaa** *shows sth. to sb.,* and **baraa** *teaches sth. to sb., introduces sb. to sb.*

In the basic meaning 'put' no preposition is used in Somali

saaraa, saartaa puts something somewhere, on someting, puts down

Cawska ayuu saarayaa saqafka. He is putting the straw on the roof.

Awrta waxa la saaraa carruurta iyo maqasha. On the pack-camels on puts the children and the lambs-and-kids.

The same is true for the participle

saaran yahay is on, stands on, lies on, is positioned on, is situated on (no prepositions needed)

Buug baa miiska saaran. There is a book on the table. Det ligger en bok på <mark>bordet.</mark>

Cuntadu waxay saaran tahay dabka. The food is on the fire.

But adding a preposition gives the verb other meanings.

<mark>ka saaraa, ka saartaa takes out of, picks up</mark>

Seefta galka ka saar! Take the sword out of the cover / sheath.

Waxa ay kari waayeen in ay madaxa ri'da ka saaraan dheriga . They didn't manage to get the goat's head out of the clay pot.

u kala saaraa, u kala saartaa divides into, separates into

Magacyadan u kala saar lab iyo dheddig. Divide these nouns into masculine and feminine (ones). Xayawaannadan u kala saar dab-joog iyo duur-joog. Divide these animals into tame and wild (ones). (lit. those living by the fire and those living in the woods)

§ 13.1.5 Adverbials

Noun phrases that are associated with a preposition are referred to as adverbial complements. The preposition is always found in the verb phrase, and from there it refers to one of the noun phrases in the clause. Which noun phrase it points to can only be inferred from the context.



We get water from MANY PLACES. / We find water in MANY PLACES.



In the homes we eat DIFFERENT KINDS OF FOOD.

In practically all languages that have prepositions, their use is partially unpredictable. Certain head words (basically verbs and adjectives) simply require a certain preposition, sometimes without a very logical reason. It is therefore important to learn verbs and adjectives together with their required preposition.

§ 13.1.5a The preposition *u*

The preposition $\mathbf{\hat{u}}$ is used in the following main functions.

(i) The spatial GOAL of a motion: *to*.

Xaáwo halkeé bay ú socotaa? Where is Hawo going? Dugsiga ayaa ay u socotaa. She is going to school.

(ii) RECIPIENT OR BENEFICIENT: to, for

Recipients or beneficients are usually persons receiving something och benefitting from some action.

Kallúunka waxa ay ú shiílaysaa qóyskooda.

She is frying/grilling the fish for her family.

Warkii Cali baa aan u sheegay.

I told the news to Ali.

(iii) PURPOSE: to, for, as

Biyáha waxa aynu ú isticmaalnaa cabbitáan. *We use water for drinking / as a drink.*

(iv) MANNER: *in, like*

To express manner, the preposition **ú** is very often used together with the noun **si** *manner*, *way* corresonding to English *in a* … *way* or *in a* … *manner*.

Sidee bay dadka tuulo-joogga ahi u nadiifiyaan ilaha biyahooda? *In what way do the people in the village keep their sources of water clean?*

Biyaha waxa aynu u isticmaalnaa siyaabo kala duwan.

We use water in different ways.

Si fiican isugu garaac iskujirkaas. way good self.in.in hit that. mixture [isku garaacaa = whips together] Whip that mix together properly.

Sidaas ayaa uu socdaalkii u dhammaystay. *The journey ended in that way / like that.*

Sidee baa aad u nadiifisaa gurigaaga?

what.manner FOC you in clean your.house *How do you clean your house?*

Sometimes the noun **hab** *manner*, *method*, *order* is used instead of **si**.

U dhig weerooyinkan habka ay isugu xigaan. *Place these sentences in the order in which they are interrelated.*

In certain types of manner adverbials the preposition **ú** is used without any accompanying noun like **si(da)** or **hab(ka)**.

Laba-labo u shaqeeya. *Work in pairs.*

U baxa dibedda, ka dibna u ciyaara kooxo kala duwan.

Go outside, and then play in different groups.

(v) Special uses of the preposition ú:

aad ... **ú** *to a high degree, a lot, much, very* is used as an adverbial of degree together with both adjectives and verbs.

Carruurtaydu aad baa ay u fiican tahay.

my.children high.degree FOC they to good are *My children are VERY good*.

ú fiirsadaa, ú fiirsataa looks at

Ú fiirsó nínka. *Look at the man.*

ú baahán yahay is in need of, has need for, needs

Wáxa aynu ú baahán nahay cuntó. FOC we for needing are food We are in need of FOOD. = We need FOOD. / We are hungry.

ú ég yahay is similar to

Kabahaygu kuwaaga ayaa ay u eg yihiin.my.shoesyoursFOC they to similar areMy shoes are similar to YOURS.

§ 13.1.5b The preposition *ku*

Remember that Somali also has the object pronoun **ku** *you* (SG) (see § 9.2) as well as the indefinite pronoun **ku** *a*, *an* (see § 9.3.1).

The preposition **kú** is used in the following main functions.

(i) Position: *in*, *on*.

Teneggan subag baa ku jira.

In this container there is butter.

Xasan waxa uu <mark>ku</mark> nool yahay <mark>Boosaaso</mark>.

Hassan lives in Bosaso.

Sahra waxa ay kalluun ku iibinaysaa suuqa. Sahra is selling fish at the market.

Waxa ay biyaha ku rartaan awrtooda. *They load water onto their camels.*

Immisa wiil ayaa fasalka ku jira? *How many boys are there in the class?*

Sometimes the noun phrase governed by the preposition is only implied.

Ku buuxi shaqalka oo akhri erayga! Fill in the vowel and read the word!

(ii) Tool: with.

Erayadan far fiican ku qor. Write these words with a nice handwriting.

Isku qallaji shukumaan nadiif ah. oneself.with dry towel clean.thing being Dry yourself with a clean towel.

Also the money used to buy something *for* (*with*), as well as the languages a person speaks, are expressed as tools in Somali.

Shan shilin waxa ay ku iibsatay liin. five.items shilling FOC she with bought CITRIC.FRUIT *For five shillings she bought citric fruit.*

Anigu waxa aan ku hadlaa afka Ingiriiska iyo afka Carabiga. I FOC I with speak THE.LANGUAGE THE.ENGLISH AND THE.LANGAUGE THE.ARABIC I speak English and Arabic.

Sometimes it might be difficult to draw a clear line between position and tool.

Dabka waxa aan ku karsannaa cuntada.

the.fire FOC we with/on cook THE.FOOD With / On the fire we cook food.

The preposition **ku** expresses a place/position or a tool/means to accomplish something.

In this sentence two interpretations are eauqally possible, but one would probably prioritise the 'tool' interpretation in Somali.

Kalluunka waxaa lagu qallajinayaa qorraxda.the.fishFOCone.inis.dryingthe.sunlit. One is drying the fish in the SUN.They are drying the fish using the SUN.

(iii) circumstance

Carruurtu habeen walba gaajo baa ay ku seexdaan. the.children night every HUNGER FOC they in fall.asleep *The children fall asleep hungry every night.*

(iv) abstract aim of goal: to, for

Eraygee baa ku habboon sawirka? WHICH.WORD FOC for suitable the.picture *Which word suits the picture?*

(v) the listening interlocutor: *to*

Waxa uu ku yiri xaaskiisa, "Ma kartid." FOC he to said his.wife NOT YOU.CAN He said to his wife: – You can't (do that).

"Ma rabo," ayaa ay ku jawaabtay. NOT I.WANT FOC she to replied - I don't want to, she replied to him.

(vi) with reference to something: regarding

ku saabsan yahay – is about, tells about, discusses

Qoraalkani waxa uu ku saabsan yahay qoyskayga.

text.thisFOCitabout regarding isFAMILY-MYThis text is about my family.

§ 13.1.5c The preposition *ka*

Remember that Somali also has the demonstrative pronoun **ka** *the, this*. See § 9.3.1.

The preposition **ká** is used in the following main functions.

(i) Origin or source: *from, of*.

Webi Shabeelle meeshee buu ka yimaadaa?

From what place does the river Shabeelle come?

Guuleed dugsiga waxa uu ka yimaadaa laba iyo tobanka iyo barka. *Guled comes from school at half past twelve.*

In Somali, just like many other languages, certain abstract actions (t.ex. *buys, finds, is seen*) are perceived as originating *from* a certain place, whereas in English they are generally perceived as more static, happening *in* a certain place.

Waxa aan biyaha ká helnaa meelo badan. We find water in many places / get water from many places.

Magacow cuntada kala duwan ee sawirka ka muuqata. *Give the names of the different foods shown in the picture.*

Badda ayaa uu kalluun ka dabanayaa. *He catches fish in the sea.* (lit. *from the sea*)

Dugsiga maxaa aad ka barataa? What do you learn at school? (lit. from the school)

(ii) Material: of

Markaa burkii ayey ka samaysay rooti. Then she made bread of the flour. (iii) Topic: about

Ka hadal sawirrada. Talk about the pictures.

Hodan waxa ay wax ka qortay xeebta. *Hodan wrote something about the coast.*

(iv) Comparison: *than*

Soddon waa ay ka yar tahay konton. *Thirty is less than fifty.*

Faadumo waa ka dheer tahay Caasho. *Faduma is taller than Asha.*

(v) The semantic "object" of certain intransitive verbs: *in*, on

Lug baa uu ka dhaawacmay. LEG FOC he in was.hurt *He was hurt in a leg*.

(vi) In certain fixed phrases.

Ká jawáab su'aaláhan. Answer these questions.

Waxa uu ká shaqeeyaa dukáankiisa yar.

He works in his little shop.

Waa uu ká helaa iyáda.

He likes / fancies her.

§ 13.1.5d The preposition *la*

Remember that Somali also has the indefinite subject pronoun **la** *one, you, they*. See § 9.2.1.

The preposition **lá** has only one main function.

(i) Company: (together) with.

Waxa uu la socdaa saaxiibkiis.

He walks together with his friend.

Sahra waxay la ciyaaraysaa Farxiya. Sahra is playing with Farhiya.

(ii) It is also used in a few fixed phrases.

la tahay, in ... – *thinks, believes that* ...

Waxa ay ila tahay in aanu taas samayn karayn. FOC it me.with is that not.he that do could. I don't think that he could do that. (lit. I think that he could not do that.)

§ 13.1.5e Complex "preposition phrases"

The content of the phrase *near Mogadishu* may also be rendered by the more complex phrase *in the vicinity of Mogadishu*. The exact location is expressed by the noun *vicinity* which in turn is preceded by the preposition *in*. Further examples are *in front of the house, on top of the cupboard*. Such complex constructions are even more frequent in Somali than in English.

The Somali equivalent of most English prepositions are expressions involving a combination of one of the four basic prepositions and a noun that expresses the precise relation or location. Such nouns take a possessive suffix.

MASC.SING.	FEM.SING.	PLURAL	
agtiisa	agteeda	agtooda	near, close to
hoostiisa	hoosteeda	hoostooda	under
dhexdiisa	dhexdeeda	dhexdooda	inside, between

Which of the three forms to choose depends on the gender and number of the noun that the "position noun" refers to.

Ku sawir bisad <u>kursiga</u> hoost<u>iis</u>a. in draw cat the.chair its.underside *Draw a cat under the chair*.

Saýnab qoýskoodu wáxa uu kú nóol yahay bádda ágteeda.

Saynab their.family.SUBJ FOC it in living is the.sea its.vicinity Saynab's family lives in THE VICINITY OF THE SEA = NEAR THE SEA.

 Waxa aan ku arkaa biyaha dhexdooda digaagad.

 FOC
 I
 in
 see
 the.water
 its.middle
 hen

 I see a hen in THE MIDDLE OF THE WATER = DOWN IN THE WATER.

§ 13.1.5f Preposition with position particle

A position particle can be used together with a preposition in order to make the reference more precise.

Digaagaddii iyaduna waxa ay iska dhex aragtay biyihii. the.hen.you,know she.also FOC she herself.from middle saw the.water.you.know *The hen, she too saw herself down in the water.*

The combination **ka dul** most often corresponds to English *over* expressing a motion surmounting an "obstacle".

Waan ka dul boodi karaa. I can jump over it. Igama dul boodi kartid. You can't jump over me.

§ 13.1.5g Variation in the use of prepositions

In certain constructions, some variation is at hand in the use of prepositions.

ú dhow / kú dhow close to

Booqó iláha biyáha ee kú dhow / ú dhow dúgsigaaga. visit the sources the water that to close to close your school *Visit the sources of water that are close to your school.*

ká caawiyaa (kú caawiyaa) – help (someone) with (something)

Waxa ay kú / ká caawisay Cáli shaqo-gúriga. FOC she with helped Ali THE.HOMEWORK She helped Ali with the homework.

Sometimes the variation seems to be geographically conditioned.

§ 13.1.5h Indirect Object or Recipient

Most verbs express an indirect object or recipient through the proposition u *to, for,* but a few verbs take two objects without the preposition, e.g. **siiyaa** *gives*.

Waxa uu <> Aamina <> siiyay <> siddeed neef oo geel ah.

He gave Amina EIGHT CAMELS.

§ 13.1.5i Adverbials of place

Some Somali motion verbs, such as **aadaa** *goes*, **tagaa** *leaves*, **yimaaddaa** *comes*, take an adverbial of place without any preposition.

Carruurtu <> waxa ay <> aadayaan <> guriga adeerkood.

The children are going to their uncle's house.

Diinkii \Leftrightarrow **waxa uu** \Leftrightarrow **yimid** \Leftrightarrow **gurigiisa.** *The turtle came to its house.* = *The turtle came home.*

Diinka iyo xaaskiisu <> waxay <> tageen <> guriga Maroodiga. The turtle and his wife went to Elephant's house.

Kaalay <> **bannaanka**. Come to the open space. = Come outside.

Also a few verbs that take an object, such as **saaraa** *puts*, are accompanied by an adverbial of place without any preposition.

Cumar \diamond **cawska** \diamond **ayuu** \diamond **saarayaa** \diamond **saqafka.** *Omar puts GRASS on the roof.*

§ 13.1.5j Adverbials of time

Many Somali phrases expressing time are used without any preposition.

Waxa uu ⇔ tágayaa ⇔ masaájidka ⇔ maalínta Jimcáha. He is leaving for the mosque on Friday.

Noun phrases that express time and refer to the past most often take the demonstrative ending **-kii/-tii**.

Afartii galabnimo ayaa uu ka soo baxay aqalkii. *At four in the afternoon he came out from the house.*

Toddobáadkii hore aábbe wuxuu tagay magaaló kale. *Last week mother and father went to another city.*

When reference is made to the future or to something that is repeated as a habit, only the ordinary definite article is used.

Maalin kasta Faadumo waxa ay kacdaa shanta aroornimo.

Every day Faduma gets up AT FIVE IN THE MORNING.

§ 13.1.6 Vocatives

Many languages have special grammatical forms expressing that a word or a phrase is used in order to address a person (or even a thing). In Somali this function is expressed by a high tone on the initial vowel position.

Mácallin! is used to address a teacher, whereasmacállin is used to talk about a teacher.Fáadumo!, Máxamed! are used to address these persons, whereasFaadúmo, Maxámed are used to talk about them.

Vocative phrases can also be formed with suffixes.

At the end of a phrase with a feminine singular head noun the ending –ey (only –y after –o/–a) is added. It may be written with a long or a short vowel, i.e. –ey, –eey, –ay, –aay, –oy, –ooy. If one gets very emotional even more than two vowels may sometimes be written.

Máryan <mark>éy</mark> !	Hey, Maryan!
Bisádda yar <mark>éey</mark> !	Dear little cat!
Digaagád <mark>éy</mark> !	Hey, hen!

The vocative ending for phrases with a masculine head noun is **-ow**/**-oow**.

Maxámedów!Hey, Mahamed!Daanyéerów!Hey, monkey!

§ 13.2 Clauses with the verb *to be*

Declarative clauses that contain the verb **yahay** *is* differ in some respects from ordinary declarative clauses.

(a) If the predicative complement does not contain a noun, but just an adjective, the adjective goes in the verb phrase, immediately before the verb **yahay** *is*. The short subject pronoun is often omitted.

```
Dukáanku <> waa (uu) <> wéyn yahay.
The shop is big.
Gabádhu <> waa (ay) <> wéyn tahay.
The girl is big.
```

(b) In Somali, as in languages such as Arabic and Russian, no present tense form of the verb *to be* is necessary if the predicative complemet is a noun or a noun phrase. Also, the short subject pronoun is omitted.

```
Sahro ⇔ waa ⇔ macallimad.
Sahra is a teacher.
Cumar ⇔ waa ⇔ arday wanaagsan.
Omar is a good pupil.
```

This type of clause lacks a verb phrase. Instead the paticle phrase relates to and has a fixed position relative to the predicative complement NP.

§ 13.2.1 *To be* with focused subjects

(a) If the subject is focused and the predicate complement is a noun phrase, the reduced verb form must be used, just as with any other verb.

Shimbiraha qaar ⇔ baa ⇔ ah ⇔ xayawaan waxtar leh.

A PART OF THE BIRDS are useful animals.

(**b**) If the subject is focused and the predicate complement is an adjective, the reduced form **ah** *being* is omitted in the present tense.

```
Dád badani <> waxa ay <> kú nóol yihiin <> magaaloóyinka.
Many people live in (the) CITIES.
```

Dád badan <> baa <> kú nóol × <> magaaloóyinka.

MANY PEOPLE live in (the) cities.

§ 13.2.2 Comparison

When two items are compared, the words *like* or *as* are often used in English. In Somali the noun **sida** *the way*, *the manner* is most often used as the head of a noun phrase. This noun phrase often becomes a predicative complement.

Midabkeedu <> waa <> sida qiiqa.

its.colour.SUBJ DECL the.way the.smoke Its colour is like smoke.

§ 13.2.3 Telling the time

Numbers used to tell the time in the present/past most often take the demonstrative endings **-kii/-tii**.

Waa immisadii? – Waa shantii. What time is it? – It's five o'clock. Waa kowdii iyo badhkii. It's half past one.

When refering to future or repeated events, the definite article **–ka/–ta** is used.

<mark>Example</mark>

§ 13.3 Questions

§ 13.3.1 Wh-questions with focus

Wh-words are usually focused by a focus particle.

Qóysku xaggeé baa uu aaday ugu horreýntii? WHERE did the family go first of all? Two of the wh-words are obligatorily contracte with the following focus particle into one word.

maxaý what? + baa / ayaa > maxáa WHAT?
ayó who? + baa / ayaa > yáa WHO?
Yaa ay siisay hooyo hilibkii? WHO did mother give the meat to?
Maxaa ay u samaysay sidaas? WHY did she do it that way?
Maxaa uu ahaa dharka cusub ee Faadumo loo iibiyay? WHAT were the new clothes that one had bought for Faduma?

As always, the short subject pronoun can of course be contracted with the focus particle in a more colloquial style. Notice especially the irregular form **muxúu** *WHAT* ... *he*? < **maxaý** + **baa** / **ayaa** + **uu**.

Faadumo iyo Xasan adeerkood muxuu siiyay?

Faduma and Hassan's uncle, WHAT did he give to them?

If the focused wh-word phrase at the same time is the subject of the clause, there will of course not be any short subject pronoun and the verb will be in its reduced form. The form **ah** *being* is omitted after an adjective.

Ímmisa wiil ayáa fásalka kú jira? HOW MANY BOYS are there in the class? Maxáa dhíci doona? WHAT will happen? Yáa rabá in uu falo haruurka? WHO wants to sow the sorghum? Maxáa ká duwán ≭ ? WHAT is different (than ...)?

After the pronoun **kee/tee?** *which?* and nouns with this ending, the focus particle **baa** or **ayaa** is often omitted, but the question word is still focused. One could say that this interrogative pronoun and ending has inherent focus, and in clauses where such question words are the subject, there is

therefore no short subject pronoun and the verb is used in its reduced form. The form **ah** *being* is omitted after adjectives.

Kee dhéer * ?Which one is (the) long(est)?Kee gaabán * ?Which one is (the) short(ast)?

§ 13.3.2 Wh-questions without focus

More seldom wh-questions without focus do occur. Then the clause contains the sentence type particle **waa**, otherwise typically used in declarative clauses.

Dhárka Xasan waa midabkeé? What colour are Hassan's clothes?

§ 13.3.3 Yes/no-questions

In a qustion that requires *yes* or *no* as an answer, the sentence type particle **ma**²⁰ is used together with the ordinary forms of the verb. The short subject pronoun is optional.

Compared to corresponding statements, **ma** replaces **waa**, but it is added to clauses with **waxa/waxaa** or **ayaa/baa**.

Waxaan tagayaa Burco. I'm going to Burao. Ma waxaad tagaysaa Burco? Are you going to Burao?

The question particle **ma** has a high tone if the following phrase doesn't have a high tone. This is above all so for the simple aspect of verbs and the object pronouns.

Má ⇔ i aragtaa? Do you see me? Adígu ⇔ má ⇔ tahay ⇔ hooyáday? Are you my mother?

²⁰ A similar particle exists in many other languages, such as Arabic (*hal*), Finnish (*-ko/-kö*), French (*est-ce que*), Persian ($\bar{a}y\bar{a}$), Polish (*czy*) and Russian (*li*), but in most languages it is not obligatory, like in Somali.

The question particle **ma** does not have a high tone if the following phrase has a high tone. This is above all so for the progressive and habitual aspect of verbs as well as prepositions and nouns.

```
Adígu ⇔ ma ⇔ kú nóoshahay ⇔ gúri magaalo?
Do you live in an urban house?
Ma ⇔ nabád ⇔ baa?
Are you doing okey? How are you doing?
```

Many yes/no-questions, alongside the question paticle **ma**, also contain a focus particle. This is especially frequent with the verb *to be*.

If the predicative complement is a focused noun, the present tense forms of **yahay** are omitted in yes/no-questions, just like in the corresponding declarative clauses.

Kani ma Áxmed baa?	Is this Ahmed?
Tani ma Sáhraa ²¹ ?	Is this Sahra?

If instead **ayáa** is used, **ma** goes after the focused noun or noun phrase and **ma + ayáa** are contracted into **miyáa**.

```
Maxamed ma macállin baa?
= Maxamed macállin miyáa?
Is Mohamed a teacher?
```

Without focus the verb **yahay** *is* functions just like any other verb.

Gurigiinnu \Leftrightarrow ma \Leftrightarrow yahay \Leftrightarrow sida Rooble gurigooda? your.house.SUBJ QUEST is the.way Roble their.house Is your hose the way Roble's house (is)? = ...like Rooble's house?

²¹ Sahraa is an obligatory contraction of Sahro+baa.

§ 13.3.4 Multiple choice questions

In questions where one is expected to choose one of the alternatives **mise** *or* is used between the two phrases.

Ma waxay joogtay <u>xagga bari</u> mise <u>xagga galbeed</u>? Was it located in the east or in the west?

Ma <u>magaalo</u> baa aad ku dhalatay <u>mise miyi</u>?

Were you born in the city or in the countryside?

If **mise** is used between clauses, the first clause contains the question particle **ma** whereas the second clause is a declarative clause with the particle **waa**.

Ma oggolaatay mise waa aad diidday?

Did you approve or did you say no?

§ 13.4 Commands

Commands are mainly expressed by the verb's imperative form.

Clauses in the imperative have no particle phrase.

Sheeg magacyada laba ciidood.

Tell the names of two holidays.

Qor laba waxtar oo kale oo uu dabku leeyahay.

Write two other usages that fire has.

§ 13.4.1 Warnings and prohibitions

In Somali grammar, warnings and prohibitions are often presented as negative imperatives, but they are actually expressed through a special construction which may be referred to as the PROHIBITIVE. The construction consists of the sentence particle **ha** *don't* followed by the reduced simple present subjunctive. The tone is on the second to last vowel position.

Ha tégin hádda, waáyo waa mádow.

Don't go now, since it's dark.

When addressing several person, a final **–a** is added, just like in the imperative. The tone is on the second to last vowel position.

Ha tegína hádda, waáyo waa mádow.

Don't go now, since it's dark.

§ 13.5 Negative clauses

In negative declarative clauses the sentence type particle **má** *not* is used. It always has a high tone. The verb is in the subjunctive. See § 11.10. The short subject pronouns are not obligatory, but frequently used by some.

Má (aan) rabo. I don't want it. / I don't want to (do it). cf. Wáa aan rabaa. I want it. / I want to (do it).

Write about 'negation' in general

There are two negations, ma and aan. Ma is a sentence particle, and replaces waa.

Waa ay ordaysaa. She is running. Ma (ay) ordayso. She is not running.

Aan is not a sentence particle, and it can be added in sentences that already contain a sentence particle, e.g. a focus particle. It is also used in subclauses, since a subclause can never contain a sentence particle.

Cali baa ordaya. ALI is running. Cali baa aan ordayn(in). ALI is/was not running. (**aan** always combines with the reduced subjunctive)

And finally, both are often used together in main clauses in the past tense, as in the example above.

Often double negation in the past tense.

Negative progressive (see 11.10.1) either negation + progr. subj. OR inf. + neg. progr. aux.

§14. Coordination

There are three words in Somali that correspond to English *and*, namely **iyo**, **oo** and **–na**.

(a) The conjunction **iyo** *and* is used between nouns or noun phrases.

Safiya iyo Cali Safiya and Ali lix iyo toban sixteen Rooti iyo caano baa uu rabaa. He wants bread and milk.

Most subclauses begin with a noun. This means that subclauses are noun phrases and such subclauses are therefore joined by **iyo**.

<mark>Example</mark>

(b) The conjunction **oo** *and* is used between two verbs.

Akhri oo sawir! Read and draw! Aniga ayaa shaqeeyay oo cunaya. I'm the one who has done the work and will eat.

It is also used between two adjectives or adjective phrases that modify an indefinite noun.

Waa isbitaal weyn oo wanaagsan.

It is a big and good hospital.

Qor qoraal [gaaban] oo [ku saabsan qoyskaaga]. write text short and to relating your.family *Write a [short] text [about your family].*

It can also be used between full main clauses or fragments of main clauses as long as there is a predicate verb in the fragment that follows.

ariga uu raaco waxay ka kooban yihiin riyo iyo ido oo wuxuu soo daajiyaa guriga agtiisa. Markaii duhurka la gaaro ayaa waxaa loo geeyaa cunto iyo biyo. Markay qorraxdu dhacdo ayuu ariga guriga ku soo celiyaa. Habeenkii geedi waxaa loo lisaa caano oo wuxuu jecelyahay caanaha lo'da iyo geela, It may also be used to introduce follow-up questions.

Waxaan ku nool ahay meel fog. – Oo waa xaggee? *I live in a place far away. – And where is that?*

(d) The conjunction **–na** *and* is used between main clauses. It is attached to the first phrase of the second clause.

Maroodigani waa weyn yahay, maroodiganina waa yar yahay. *This elephant is small and this elephant is big.*

Fasalku waa weyn yahay, ardayduna waa badan yihiin. *The classroom is big and the pupils are many.*

It may also be used to introduce follow-up questions.

Magacaygu waa Xasan. – Adigana magacaa? *My name is Hassan. – And you, what's your name?*

§ 14.1 The Conjunctions *ama* and *mise*

Somali has two conjunctions corresponding to English *or*, namely **ama** and **mise**.

The conjunction **ama** *or* is used in declarative clauses.

Cali waxaa uu jiraa guriga ama dugsiga. Ali is at home or at school.
Shaqadaydu ma aha in aan dilo ama dhaawaco. My job is not to kill or injure.

A repetition of **ama** before both the alternatives corresponds to English *either* ... *or*.

Ama isaga ama wasiiraddiisa, khasab ma aha inuu isagu yimaaddo. *Either* he or his minister, it is not necessary that he comes himself.

In questions where one is expected to choose one of the alternatives **mise** *or* is used.

Ma magaalo baa aad ku dhalatay mise miyi?

Were you born in a city or in the countryside?

If **mise** is used between clauses, the first clause contains the question particle **ma** whereas the second clause is a declarative clause with the particle **waa**.

Ma oggolaatay, mise waa aad diidday?

Did you approve or did you say no?

If you are not expected to make a choice, **ama** is used also in questions.

Ma maqashay sheeko kale oo ku saabsan diiq ama dawaco? *Have you heard any other story about a cock or a fox?*

§ 14.2 The Conjunction *ee*

The conjunction **ee** is used between two main clauses to express that there is a logical relation between the clauses, often some kind of cause and effect. The corresponding English word is often *so, then* or *and*.

Digaagad ayaa biyaha ku dhex jirta ee waa in aad noo soo gurmataa. *There is a hen down in the water, so you must come and help us.*

Ee is often used to contrast two clauses. Then one clause is usually negative, and the other one positive. After a negative clause, **ee** corresponds fairly well to English *but*. Before a negative clause, though, English usually doesn't have any conjunction at all.

Maya, ma aha Safiya, ee waa Khadra. No, it's not Safia, (but) it's Khadra. Anigu dhakhtar baan ahay, ee askari ma ihi! I'm a doctor, (so) I'm not a soldier!

§ 14.3 The Conjunctions *laakiin, -se* and *balse*

The three conjunctions **laakiín**, **balsé**, **-se** *but* are used to connect two main clauses. There is always a sentence particle in both clauses.

Soomaáli báan ahay, <u>laakiín</u> wáxaan kú dhashay Itóobiya. I am SOMALI, <u>but</u> I was born in ETHIOPIA.

Cumar waa wiil fiican, <u>balse</u> dhibaataa ka haysata xagga akhriska. *Omar is a GOOD BOY, but he has DIFFICULTIES with regard to reading.*

The conjunction **–se** is added to the first phrase of the second clause. It puts less emphasis on the contrast than do **laakiín** and **balsé**.

Anigaa dugsiga dhigta, Faaduma<u>se</u> ma dhigato. *I attend school, but Faduma doesn't (attend).*

-se and can also be used in a contrasting follow-up-question.

Nin miyaad leedahay? – Haa. – Wax carruur ah<u>se</u>? – Shan carruur ah baan leeyahay. Do you have a husband? – Yes. – And any children? – I have five children.

§ 14.4 The Conjunction *waáyo*

The conjunction **waáyo** *because, since* connects two main clauses and introduces an explanation. There is always a sentence particle in both clauses.

Waxa uu xidhán yahay dhár fudud <u>waáyo</u> waa xílli kulul.

He is dressed in LIGHT CLOTHES <u>*since*</u> *it is a warm season.*

§ 15. Subordinate clauses

A Somali subordinate clause can straight-forwardly be identified by its lack of a sentence particle. Only main clauses contain a sentence particle.

Waa maxay shaqada <u>Aamina samaynaysaa</u>? PART what the.work Amina is.doing What's the work (that) <u>Amina is doing</u>?

Notice that in this chapter all subordinate clauses will be underlined.

§ 15.1 The form of the verb in subclauses

Most importantly, subclauses are divided into those that contain a noun or a pronoun representing the subject of the subclause and those that do not contain any such subject word.

If there is a subject word in the subclause, the present/future subjunctive is used, or the ordinary past tense.

If there is no subject word in the subclause, the reduced <mark>indicative forms</mark> (short basic forms) are used.

(a) If the subclause contains a word denoting the subject, then the verb will be in the present or future subjunctive, describing an imagined event, or in the ordinary past tense, describing a real event.

Sheeg waxyaabaha <u>aad sawirka ku aragtid</u>.

tell the.things you the.picture in see

Tell the things you see in the picture. / Tell what things you see ...

Fiiri sida <u>ay u samaynayso</u>.

look the way she in is doing

Look at the way she is doing it in. / Look how she is doing it.

U sheeg fasalka waxa aad biyaha u isticmaasho gurigiinna.

to tell the class the thing you the water for use your house Tell the class what you use water for in your home.

Sawirradani waxa ay ina tusayaan meelaha <u>aynu biyaha ka helno</u>. these.pictures FOC they us show the.places we the.water from find *These pictures show us the places we get water from.* The two irregular verbs **yahay** *is* and **leeyahay** *has* are however used in the ordinary present tense.

<u>Marka ay xilli kulul tahay</u> waxa aynu xidhannaa dhar fudud. the.moment it season warm is PART we put on clothes light <u>When it is a warm season</u> we put o on LIGHT CLOTHES.
Qor laba waxtar oo kale oo <u>uu dabku leeyahay</u>.
write two benefit and other and it the.fire has Write two other uses that fire has. / ...that there is for fire.

(b) If the subclause does not contain any subject word, the verb is in the reduced form. Then, the subject of the subclause is the head noun that the subclause modifies. The head noun is part of the main clause.

Waxa aan ahay arday <u>dhigta fasalka 2aad</u>.

I'm a pupil <u>who studies in the 2nd grade</u>. I'm a pupil <u>studying in the 2nd grade</u>. or even: *I'm a pupil <u>in the 2nd grade</u>.*²²

In this type of clauses, many languages of the world use a participle or a gerund.

(c) A negative subclause is always in the reduced subjunctive, lacking the distinction between present and past tense. This form is used since there is a two-fold reason for the subjunctive, both subclause and negation.

<mark>Example</mark>

§ 15.1.1 The time realtion between verbs

The time relation between the situation inte the main clause and the situation in the subclause is called TAXIS. Different languages express such relations in different ways. In English it is common to apply the same time in both clauses if the situations are simultaneous, but in Somali the present

²² Often, a verb in a relative clause like this may be omitted in English if it does not really contribute anything to the meaning that is not evident from the context. The reason for this syntactic difference between the two languages is that a preposition may connect two nouns in English, whereas in Somali prepositions always connect a verb (or adjective) and a noun.

tense is used in the subclause to express simultaneity. It doesn't matter if the main clause is in the past, simultaneity still makes the subclause occur in the present tense.

Waxa ay tagtay meel <u>ay biyo ku jiraan</u>. the thin she went place it water in exists *She went* to a place where there was water.

Odaygii baa u sheegay <u>in ay toddoba nin yihiin</u>.

The old man **told** them that they **were** seven men.

Past tense in subclause means that the event of the subclause preceded the event in the main clause, which will often correspond to the past perfect tense in English.

Nimankii maxaa ay ugu maleeyeen in nin ka dhumay?

Why did the men think that att one man had disappeared from them?

In a temporal subclause, PROGRESSIVE present tense means that the actions in both clauses are simultaneous.

<u>Markii uu casar tukanayo</u> carruurtu waxa ay akhrinayaan Qur'aanka. When he prays the afternoon prayer the children read the Quran.

In a temporal subclause, SIMPLE present tense means that the action in the subclause has come to an end before the action in the main clause starts.

<u>Markii uu casar tukado</u> carruurtu waxa ay akhrinayaan Qur'aanka. the.moment he afternoon prays the.cnildren FOC they are.reading the.Quran When he has prayed the afternoon prayer the children read the Quran.

Sometimes both present and past may be used in English if the time relation is clear from the context.

Carruurtu <u>marka</u> ay masaajidka ka soo <u>noqdaan</u> waxa ay cunayaan buskud iyo xalwo.

When the children (have) come back from the mosque they eat cookies and halva.

<u>Markii Qur'aanka akhriskiisu uu dhammaado</u> carruurtu waxa ay aadayaan guriga adeerkood.

When the Quran reading ends / has ended, the children go to their uncle's house.

§ 15.2 In-clauses

The only frequent subordinating conjunction in Somali is in that.

A subject word is obligatory in **ín**-clause, and therefore the verb is always in the present or future subjunctive, or in the ordinary past tense.

§ 15.2.1 Object clauses with *in*

Subclauses beginning with **ín** mostly occur as objects of the main clause verb.

Ma jeceshahay <u>in aad soo booqato ayeeyadaa</u>?

QUEST you.like that you towards visit your.grandmother Do you like to visit your grandmother?

Ma u malaynaysaa <u>in haramcadkii la hadlay Maxamed</u>? QUEST in you.believe that the leopard with talked Mahamed Do you think that the leopard talked with Mahamed?

Some verbs that are followed by an infinitive phrase in English correspond to Somali verbs that must be followed by an **ín**-clause.

Cali wáxa uu rabaa <u>ín uu fuuló baaskíilka</u>. Ali FOC he wants that he rides the bike *Ali wants TO RIDE THE BIKE*.

§ 15.2.2 Subject clauses with *in*

Sometimes the *in*-clause functions as the subject of the main clause verb.

Example

§ 15.2.3 Predicative complement clauses with in

Shaqadayduna waa in aan daweeyo, ma aha in aan dilo ama dhaawaco!

And my job is to heal, it is not to kill or injure (lit. ...that I heal, it is not that I kill or injure).

§ 15.2.4 The construction *waa in...*

The phrase **waa in** corresponds to English *should, has to, must, need to*. In this construction **in** *that* may be followed by either the present subjunctive or the ordinary present tense.

Waa in aynu <mark>ilaalinnaa</mark> nadaafadda ilaha biyaheenna. Waa <u>in</u> aynu <u>ilaalinno</u> nadaafadda ilaha biyaheenna</u>.

We must protect the hygiene of our water sources.

One possible explanation for this variation could be that this construction is not straight-forwardly felt to be a subclause, since there isn't much of a main clause preceding it.

§ 15.3 Relative clauses

English relative clauses generally begin with one of the relative pronouns *which* or *that*.

The letter <u>that I received</u> had been opened. Did you watch the film <u>that I recommended</u>?

But quite often the relative pronoun may be omitted.

The letter <u>I received</u> had been opened. Did you watch the film <u>I recommended</u>?

In Somali, relative clauses are always expressed in the latter manner. Somali doesn't have any relative pronoun. Instead, the relative clause often begins with a short subject pronoun that expresses the subject of the relative subclause.

```
Waa maxay shaqada <u>ay Aamina samaynaysaa</u>?
PART what the work she Amina is doing
What'ss the work (that) Amina is doing?
```

The short subject pronoun may also go before the verb or be omitted.

Waa maxay shaqada <u>Aamina ay samaynaysaa</u>? Waa maxay shaqada <u>Aamina samaynaysaa</u>? And, very importantly, a relative clause never contains any sentence particle. This is an important characteristic of subclauses in general.

The factor that is decisive for the choice of the subjunctive is the presence of a subject word in the subclause.

If there is no subject word, the ordinary reduced verb forms are used.

In subordinate clauses that contain a subject word the subjunctive is required.

Another important reason for the subjunctive is negation.

This example is just a heading, an incomplete clause with just an NP and a relative subclause:

Waxyaabaha <||> laga helo guriga kalluumaystaha the.things <that> one.from finds the.house the.fisherman *The things one finds in a fisherman's home*

This is an imperative clause followed by a subclause:

U sheeg fasalka waxyaabaha <||> **aad ku aragto sawirka** to tell the.class the.things <that> you in see the.pucture *Tell the class the things you see in the picture*.

Both subclauses are relative clauses, adding information about the word **waxyaabaha** the things. The first subclause contains the subject word **la** *one*, the second contains **aad** *you*.

§ 15.3.1 Relative clauses with a preposition

Many relative clauses contain a preposition that points back to the noun in the main clause that the relative clause is modifying. In such cases the preposition may often be replaced in English by another suitable relative word. If the head noun denotes a place *where* is commonly used.

Sawirkani waxa uu ina tusayaa meelaha <u>aynu biyaha ka helno</u>.

This picture shows us the places <u>(that) we get water from</u>. = *This picture shows us the places <u>where we find water</u>.*

Ragga dabdemisku waxa ay isticmaalaan biyo ay dabka <mark>ku</mark> demiyaan.

<mark>a. Kani waa Rooble iyo ardaydii fasalkooda oo soo booqday Saynab dugsigooda oo</mark> xeebta ku yaalla.

b. Kani waa Rooble iyo ardaydii soo booqday dugsiga xeebta ku yaalla.

The sentence (b) that you suggest is perfectly correct.

Subclauses that **define** don't need any conjunction if the follow directly after the head noun, othewise they are preceded by 'ee'

Subclauses that describe start with 'oo'.

This means that in your sentence (b) both subclause 'define' their head noun. There are many students, but these ones are exactly those student who have been to the school at the coast.

In sentence (a) there is probably only one group of students, and they have all been to Saynab's school, so that information is purely descriptive.

In sentence (a), we know exactly what school we are talking about, namely Saynab's school, so that fact that it is at the coast is just descriptive.

In sentence (b) however, 'at the sea' is the only piece of infromation that helps us identify the school, hence it is definitional.

But we could of course also have 'oo soo booqday' in sentence (b), if all the 'available' students have participated in the trip to the coast.

§ 15.3.2 Restrictive relative clauses with *ee*

A relative clause that is not the very first modifier of its head noun must be preceded by a conjunction. The conjunction **ee** indicates that the relative clause is intimately connected with the head noun and that it is crucial in order to identify the object that the head noun is referring to.

Maxáa uu ahaa dhárka cusub ee <u>Faadumó loó iibiyay</u>? What are the new clothes <u>that one bought for Faduma</u>? Booqo ilaha biyaha ee <u>ku dhow dugsigaaga</u>. Visit the water <u>sources</u> that are clos<u>e to your school</u>.

Magacow cuntada kala duwan ee sawirka ka muuqata.

Give the names of the different kinds of food shown in the picture.

The sentences are not about any *clothes, surces* or *kinds of food*, but precisely those *one bought for Faduma*, those *that are close to your school*, and those *shown in the picture*. In order to know that, the relative clause is absolutely necessary.

§ 15.3.3 Descriptive relative clauses with *oo*

The conjunction **oo** indicates that the relative clause is only loosely connected to the head noun. It doesn't contain information that is crucial to identify the object denoted by the head noun. Rather, it just adds a bit of "extra" information, which might be very interesting and even important, but not necessary in order to identify the person or object.

(a) The conjunction **oo** is used after indefinite nouns.

Magacow saddex cunto oo kale oo aad ku cunto guriga. *Give the name of three other kinds of food that you eat at home.*

Sheeg magacyada laba ciidood oo <u>Islaamku leeyahay</u>. *Tell the names of two holidays that Islam has.*

Qor laba waxtar oo kale oo <u>uu dabku leeyahay</u>.

Write two other uses that fire has.

(b) After proper nouns **oo** must always be used before a relative clasue.

Jaamac waxa uu maqlay Xasan oo ku hadlaya telefoonka. Jama heard Hassan who was talking on the phone. = Jama heard Hassan talk(ing) on the phone.

§ 15.3.4 Relative clauses in subject noun phrases

According to the rules of standard Somali, a final **–a/–o** in a verb in a relative clause should be changed to the long vowel **–aa** if the verb in the relative clause is the final word in a subject noun phrase.

The subject noun phrase has a yellow background.

Waa maxayshaqada ay Aamina samaynaysaaPARTwhatthe.workshe Aminais.doingWhat's the work(that) Amina is doing

Waa maxay dharka <u>aad dugsiga u xidhataa</u>? What are the clothes <u>(that) you put on for school</u>?

Example with subj. NP ending in –u

The use of this subject marker is not very widespread in colloquial Somali, and it is therefore frequently lacking also in writing.

§ 15.3.5 Relative clauses in headings

Somali headings and descriptions of illustrations generally have the structure of a noun phrase containing a head noun and a relative clause with a verb in its reduced form.

Xayawaanka biyaha ku jira

The animal that is in the water = The animal in the water

Also English headings and descriptions of illustrations may contain a relative clause with a verb, but often they just contain a noun phrase followed by a preposition phrase. That kind of structure is impossible in Somali, since prepositions can only be used if followed by a verb. That is why relative clauses are more frequent in Somali than in English.

§ 15.4 Adverbial clauses

Compare the subordinate clauses in the following two sentences.

Sue immediately noticed Mary <u>when she entered the room</u>. Sue noticed Mary <u>the moment she entered the room</u>.

The noun *the moment* does the same job as the subordinating conjunction *when*. To use nouns as connecting words between clauses in this manner is extremely common in Somali. Actually, subordinating conjuntions are

quite scarce, with the exception of the very frequent subordinating conjunction **ín** *that* and a few others borrowed from Arabic.

§ 15.4.1 Temporal clauses

The most common word that introduces temporal subclauses is the noun **marka**, **markii** *the moment*. It corresponds to English *when*.

Ku bilow xaraf weyn <u>marka</u> aad qorayso magac gaar ah. Start with a big letter <u>when you write a proper noun</u>.

Qof waliba <u>markii uu hoos u eegay biyihii</u> waxa uu arkay hummaaggiisa.

Each person, when he looked down into the water, saw his mirror image.

The form **marka** is mainly used for general reference and with reference to the present and the future, whereas the form **markii** is mainly used with reference to a specific occasion in the past.

Other common words and phrases introducing a temporal subclause are

ka dib markii after (having)

Dad badan ayaa waqti badan noolaa <u>ka dib markii ay qaadeen</u> <u>cudurkan</u>.

Many people have lived a long time <u>after they got this disease</u>.

inta while

Example

inta ... aan ... ka hor before

Inta aadan akhrin ka hor:

Before you read...

ilaa *until* (borrowed from Arabic) is a subordinating conjunction.

Sidii ayaa warkii ku faafay magaaladii <u>ilaa uu boqorkiina maqlay</u>. That way the news spread in the city <u>until even the king heard it</u>.

§ 15.4.2 Conditional clauses

The most common connecting word in conditional subclauses is the noun **haddií** *the occasion*. It corresponds to English *if*.

Haddií aad erayó iskú darto waxa aad héli doontaa weér.

<u>If you put words together</u> you will get a clause.

§ 15.4.3 Final clauses

(a) Final subclauses are mostly introduced by the noun **si** *manner*, *way*, accompanied by the prepositionen $\mathbf{\acute{u}}$ *in* (*a way*) in the verb phrase of the subclause. This contruction corresponds to the English conjunctional phrases *in order to* or *so that*.

Isticmaal erayadan si aad ugu buuxiso meelaha bannaan.usethese.words way you in.with fillthe.placesempty.Use these words so that you fill the empty spaces with them.Use these words in order to fill the empty spaces.

As shown by the last translation, this kind of subclause may in English be condensed into an infinitive phrase if the subject in both clauses is identical. Such a construction does not exist in Somali.

(b) Final subclauses may also be introduced by the conjunction in *that*, which then requires the use of the preposition $\mathbf{\hat{u}}$ for in the main clause.

Shimbiríhii waxa ay ú yimaadeen <u>ín</u> ay díinka hílibkiisa jilicsan <u>cunáan</u>.

The birds came (in order) to eat the tender meat of the turtle.

The verb in final subclauses is normally in the simple present subjunctive.

§ 15.4.4 Concessive clauses

Concessive subclauses are introduced by the connecting phrase **in kasta oo** corresponding to English *even though*. The contracted form **in kastoo** / **inkastoo** is also very frequent.

Axmed waa yimid <u>in kasta oo</u> uu soo daahay.

Ahmed came, even though he was late.

§ 15.4.5 Causal clauses

Causes are usually not expressed as subordinate clauses in Somali. Instead, the phrase **sababta oo ah** / **sababtoo ah** *the reason being*, corresponding to English *since*, *because*, or the coordinating conjunction **waáyo** *since*, *because* is used. In both cases a complete main clause containing a sentence particle follows.

Maryan ayeeyadeed waa ay farxi doontaa <u>sababta oo ah</u> waxa ay jeceshahay moos.

Maryan's grandmother will be happy since she likes bananas.

Waxa uu xidhan yahay dhar fudud <u>waayo</u> waa xilli kulul.

He is dressed in light clothes <i>since it's a warm season.

§ 15.4.6 Circumstantial clauses

A special type of relative clauses are used to express different kinds of circumstances. A long personal pronoun, or sometimes a noun, is followed by the conjunction **oo** and a relative clause. This type of construction may express time, manner, reason etc. and the interpretation depends only on the context.

MANNER:

Waxa aan hubinayaa qiyaastaydii <u>aniga oo adeegsanaya miisaan</u>.

I check my estimation, <u>me using a scale</u>.

= I check my estimation <u>(by)</u> using a scale.

Waxa ay noolaan kartaa muddo dheer <u>iyada oo aan biyo cabbin</u>.

It can live for a long period of time, <u>it not drinking water</u>.

= It can live for a long period of time <u>without drinking water</u>.

§ 15.4.7 Comparativ clauses

Subclauses that express a comparison are usually introduced by the noun **sida** *as*.

Sida la yiri qaar ayaa waxa ay noloshoodu gaartaa 150 sano.

As people have told the life of some of them reaches 150 years. (turtles)

§ 15.5 English indirect questions

English indirect questions are generally introduced by the same question word as the corresponding direct question, e.g., *when, where, how, what*.

Where do you live? I asked him where he lives.

In Somali question words are generally formed through the addition of the interrogative suffix **–ee** to various nouns. In "indirect questions" the same noun is used, but in the plain definite form, without the interrogative suffix **–ee**.

<mark>xaggee? – xagga</mark>

<mark>maxay? – waxa</mark>

Maxaa ay sidaasi u tahay? Why is it like that / that way? Sharax waxa ay sidaasi u tahay. Explain why it is that way / like that.

Wáxa *the thing* isn't always a focus particle. Sometimes it is a definite noun used to introduce an object subclause in the same way as English *what*.

U sheeg fasalka waxa aad biyaha u isticmaasho gurigiinna. to tell the.class the.thing you the.water for use your.house *Tell the class what you use water for at your home.*

§ 15.5.1 Indirect yes/no-questions

English indirect yes/no-questions are usually expressed as subclauses beginning with *if* or *whether*. In Somali they usually begin with *in that*.

Waxay weydiisay bisaddii iyo ridii <u>in</u> ay burka ka sameeyaan <u>canjeero ama rooti</u>.

She asked the cat and the goat *whether* they should make flat bread or *French bread with the flour*.

§ 15.6 Direct speech as object clause

Direct speech may occur as the object of a verb in a main clause. Both clauses are then main clauses and will contain a sentence particle. It is very common that the main clause contains a focus particle pointing to the object clause.

Jiirkii waxa uu yiri "<u>Anigu ma rabo</u>."

The mouse said: – I DON'T WANT TO.

"<u>Waa qaamuus</u>," ayaa uu yiri. – It's A DICTIONARY, he said.

§ 16. Colloquial Somali

§ 16.1.1 Distant vowel assimilation

Besides forms like **ilkúhu** *the teeth* and **ilkíhii** *those teeth*, with assimilation of /u/ and /i/ across /h/, the spoken language also shows assimilation with a following /e/ or /o/, but those sound changes are usually not reflected by the orthography. The most frequent spelling is, e.g., **ilkáhooda** *their teeth*, **ilkáheeda** *her teeth*, but the pronunciation is usually **ilkóhooda** and **ilkéheeda**. To render this kind of assimilation in writing is somewhat more common in certain words, e.g.

	more literary	more everyday	
aabbáha the father	aabbáheed	aabbéheed her father	
	aabb <mark>áhoo</mark> d	aabbóhood their father	

Distant vowel assimilation with /i/ also frequently occurs in a more colloquial style in the stem of some masculine nouns that end in /x/ or /c/.

mágac	name	mág <mark>ac-ii</mark> sa	(mág <mark>ic-ii</mark> sa)	his name
mádax	head	mád <mark>ax-ii</mark> sa	(mád <mark>ix-ii</mark> sa)	his head

§ 16.1.2 Vowel length in progressive morpheme

In some regions, the progressive suffix is realised with a long vowel, i.e. as /aay/. Again, in other regions it is realised as /oy/ or /ooy/.

Examples

§ 16.2 No subject case

In a colloquial style, the grammatical subject marking is sometimes missing.

Examples

This phenomenon is especially common at the very end of a clause.

Ma nadiif baa ilaha biyaha?(instead of ilaha biyuhu)Are the water sources CLEAN?

§ 16.2.1 Focus by subject pronoun

In colloquial Somali, the focus particle **baa/ayaa** very commonly disappears between a preceding noun phrase and a following short subject pronoun. The subject pronoun is contracted with the preceding noun phrase, and this construction becomes a very frequent way of expressing focus in colloquial Somali.

Examples

§ 16.2.2 Subjunctive instead of reduced verb forms

In some regions it is common to use the subjunctive instead of the reduced verb forms, both in subclauses without a subject word and in main clauses with a focused subject NP.

<mark>Examples</mark>