Roberto Ajello & Annarita Puglisielli

MORE ON "HYBRID VERBS" AND OTHER GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES IN SOMALI

1.1 What have been called 'hybrid verbs' belong to 2 different formal subclasses: radical and derived items. For example:

**RADICAL**

weyn 'big'

**DERIVED**

jaban 'broken'

They have in common the following characteristics:

I: syntactically:

a) they can both function as verbal phrases (VP):

(1) miiska waa yar yahay
    table-the(S) F small is
    'the table is small (1)'

(2) miiska baa yar
    table-the F small
    'the table (1) is small'

(3) miiska waa jaban yahay
    table-the(S) F broken is
    'the table is broken (1)'

(4) miiska baa jaban
    table-the F broken
    'the table (1) is broken'

b) they can function as noun modifiers in a structure which can be interpreted as deriving from an underlying relative clause:

(5) miiska yar ma jeeli
    table-the small not (1) am fond of
    'I don't like the small table'

(6) miiska jaban ma jeeli
    table-the broken not (1) am fond of
    'I don't like the broken table'

c) they cannot function as heads of the noun phrases (NH):
(7) *weyn ma jecll
    *big not (1) am fond of
(8) *aaduudan ma jecll
    *red not (1) am fond of

Only radicals, in very limited contexts, can occur as Nths when used with elements endowed with referential meaning, such as definite articles, anaphoric and deictic elements:

(9) weynka waan rabaa
    big-the F+I want
    'I want(!) the big one'

II: from the morphological point of view both subclasses share the same characteristics:

a) when functioning as predicates they co-occur with the verb 'to be' in the present tense (see examples (1) and (3)) and get endings for the past tense which are identical with the corresponding endings of the verb 'to be':

(10) miisku waa yaraa
    table-the(S) F small-was
    'the table was small(1)'
(11) miisku waa jabbnaa
    table-the(S) F broken-was
    'the table was broken(1)'
(12) adigu waa yarayd
    you(S) F little-were
    'you were little(1)'
(13) adigu waa sijirnaayd
    you(S) F sick-were
    'you were sick(1)'

b) they both get reduplication of the initial part of the root when the subject is plural, p.ex.:

(14) nimanku waa waaweyn yihiin
    men-the(S) F big are
    'the men are big(1)'
(15) miisaku waa jabjaban yihiin
    tables-the(S) F broken are
    'the tables are broken(1)'

III: from a semantic point of view both subclasses function as predicates of the sentence in which they occur and express 'stativity' with the only difference that forms in -am express states as resulting from a previous change; they may then be considered as past participles of the corresponding 1st conjugation verbs in -am with 'change of state' meaning, acquiring therefore an adjectival character.

Given all the characteristics so far considered, we may interpret the two subclasses as belonging to the category of adjectives, since they need the copula to perform their function as predicates. This is evidently so in the present tense while it may appear less evident for the past tense. There are two possible alternative analyses for this:

a) the endings (-aa, -ayd, -aaa etc.) are the result of the deletion of the root an of the verb 'to be' in a process of grammaticalization;

b) the present tense is a new periphrastical form which is a result of a process of transformation from verbs to adjectives.

There is no definitive evidence for one or the other of these two alternative analyses within Somali. From a synchronic point of view, there is no big difference between the two possible interpretations except for some consequences that the categorization of these items as 'hybrid verbs' entails; in order to get a consistent interpretative frame of the class of 'hybrid verbs', data are sometimes forced.

1.2 Once accepted the category of 'hybrid verbs', their inflection has been interpreted in a way parallel to that of other verbs,
belonging to both the strong and weak conjugations and consequently an 'extensive' and a 'restrictive' paradigm have been devised'": 'extensive' paradigm in all the main sentences in which the subject is not focalized by baa, 'restrictive' paradigm when the subject is focalized. From a merely syntactic point of view, such a distinction sounds satisfying, but from a morphological point of view the pattern that derives from such an interpretation is not consistent: we observe that the distinction between 'extensive' and 'restrictive' paradigm in strong and weak verbs doesn't imply presence versus absence of the endings; it rather means that in the 'restrictive' paradigm there is no distinction between singular and plural for the 2nd and 3rd person, but the gender distinction is maintained also the 1st pl. ending is maintained as in the 'extensive' paradigm.

'Hybrid verbs' would be characterized as follows:

a) for the present tense, the 'extensive' paradigm would imply the presence of a full form of the verb 'to be' or of the prefixes plus endings of the corresponding full forms of the verb 'to be':

(16) Calli waa weyn yahay
    Calli F big is
    'C is big(!)'
    or:
    (17) Calli waa weynyay
    Calli F big is
    'C. is big'(!);

the 'restrictive' paradigm would completely cancel any item following the theme of the 'hybrid verb' 

(18) Calli baa weyn
    Calli F big
    'C.(1) is big'.

b) for the past tense, the 'extensive' paradigm would entail the endings of the corresponding forms of the verb 'to be' after the theme of the 'hybrid verb', while the 'restrictive' paradigm would exhibit the same endings but in a restricted form, i.e. without distinguishing 2nd and 3rd pl. from their corresponding singular forms.

1.2.1 Apart from the discrepancy between the past and the present tense (in the present tense the endings are cancelled in the 'restrictive' paradigm, while in the past tense they only appear slightly modified in the 'restrictive' paradigm in comparison with the 'extensive' one), it's a bit hard to accept the zero-morpheme that occurs in sentences with focalized subject as a 'restrictive' paradigm of the 'hybrid verb' (as if the alternating paradigms were: -ahay, -ahay, -yahay, etc. as the 'extensive' paradigm of the present of the verb, and zero as the 'restrictive' paradigm of the same tense). On the other hand, it's not even possible to interpret the alternating endings as the two paradigms of the verb 'to be', because elsewhere the alternance between 'extensive' and 'restrictive' paradigm of the present of the verb 'to be' is interpreted as an alternance between: ahay, tahay, etc. and ah.

This results as evident from the analysis of the sentences with noun predicate:

(19) Calli macallin wuu yahay
    Calli teacher F+Pr is
    'C. is (a) teacher(!)'
    versus
    (20) Calli baa macallin ah
    Calli F teacher is
    'C.(1) is teacher'.

Thus the thematic form of the 'hybrid verbs' does not represent the 'restrictive' form of the verb 'to be', because elsewhere (Puglielli 1981:36) such a form is interpreted as being ah, and it looks a very unusual form for the 'restrictive' paradigm of the 'hybrid verbs', because in this case the 'restrictive' form
would entail zero-endings, while in all other cases 'restrictive' paradigms have got endings, although modified in comparison with the corresponding 'extensive' ones.

1.2.2 At this point the comparison with other Cushitic languages can give an interpretative clue: if we observe the same structure in Rendille (Heine 1976:176,223 and Hudson 1977) which does not have a distinction between 'extensive' and 'restrictive' paradigm, we see that the syntactic behaviour of the predicate expressed by an adjective or a noun is identical with the Somali one: when the subject of a sentence with adjectival predicate is focalized, no copula occurs, while in the same case, when the predicate is a noun, a copula is present in a form which is called 'in 

1.2.3 From the diachronic point of view, it is perhaps possible to try to reconstruct how this inflection has been formed: as Bell (1953) points out, it is probable that there was an ancient copula, now disappeared except in a few fossilized forms such as weyn, maayoo, which can be reconstructed as *weye. When this copula disappeared, it was replaced by the adjective ah inflected with prefixes derived from the 'strong' conjugation and endings derived from the 'weak' one. The recent formation of this copula would appear also from its unusual inflection, as results from the following considerations:
1) In the present tense the root *ah* is inflected with prefixes and endings, while in the past tense it has got endings only and this feature makes it different from both weak and strong verbs.

2) The endings are apparently derived from those of weak verbs, but in a not consistent way: if we reconstruct, following Heine’s indications (Heine 1978), two series of suffixes for weak verbs, one for the infectum and the other for the perfectum, such as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>infectum</th>
<th>perfectum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t/a</td>
<td>-t/at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t/a</td>
<td>-t/at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-n/a</td>
<td>-n/at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-t/aan</td>
<td>-t/aan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-aan</td>
<td>-aan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We notice that the root *ah* gets its inflection deriving the present tense mainly from the endings of the perfectum, but for 2nd and 3rd pl., which are taken from the infectum, while in the past tense the 1st sg. and 3rd sg. masc. resemble the infectum endings, while all other persons have got the ending -ay, which is typical of the perfectum.

3) A further peculiarity of this paradigm appears in the gender markers of the past tense which come after the endings (p.ex. *ah*-ay-d), this happens also for person-markers, at least for 1st pl. (*ah*-ay-n) and also for 2nd and 3rd pl., where the ending -ay is redetermined by -t/een, -teen, which are personal endings typical of the perfectum.

4) The endings for negative present are also peculiar: instead of forms with vowel -o, typical of weak verbs (*-o, -oid, -o, -to, -no, -t/aan, -aan*), the verb 'to be' has got the endings: -i, -id, -a, -a to, -en, -idin, -a.

From all the above considerations we may conclude that the inflection of adjectives results from a process of grammaticalization due to the deletion of the root of the verb 'to be'.

2.1 Some adjectives have a nominal abstract counterpart which can be used in predication with an identical value; p.ex.: *fudud, fudayd* 'light', *kulul, kulayl* 'hot', etc.

The difference between the two forms lies in that *fudayd* can occur as a NN, while *fudud* cannot, since it's an adjective:

(23) Cali *fudud*ka baan ku nacay
    *Cali lightness-the F+Pr for (I) dislike
    'I don't like C. for his light character(I)'

(24) *Cali fudud*ka baan ku nacay
    *C. light-the F+I for (I) dislike

When *fudayd* occurs as a VP, it triggers off the copula 'to be' (except in the sentences where verbal focus *wa* can co-occur with the noun only in the 3rd ps.sg. which sounds like a nominal phrase in the present tense; compare:

(25) Cali *wa* maclalin
    *Cali F teacher
    'C. is a teacher(I)'

versus

(26) Cali maclalin wu yahay
    *Cali teacher F+Pr. is
    'C. is a teacher(I)'

as happens whenever the predicate is not represented by a verb or an adjective, but by a noun.

The set of these pairs, such as:

(27) *fudud-fudayd* 'light'
    *bijil-biayl* 'ripe'
    *nugul-nugayl* 'weak'
    *culus-culayl* 'heavy'
are peculiar in that the abstract noun does not seem to be derived from the adjective, as happens in all other cases (weyna > weynaan; jaban > jabanan, etc.) and correspondingly the abstract noun can occur as the predicate while others cannot (compare: buugu fudayd wuu yahay 'the book is light (lit.: 'lightness')/ *buugu weynaan wuu yahay 'the book is bigness').

The behaviour of nouns such as fudayd seems peculiar if confronted with that of other abstract derived nouns but it's not if we compare it to all other items in the Somali lexicon that can be considered lexical nouns (i.e. subcategorized [+N] in the lexicon). It is this the case of nouns such as: run 'truth', been 'lie', gaba 'girl', macallin 'teacher' etc.; in fact, all these nouns can occur both as NPs and as predicates. This is possible because from a semantic point of view even nouns can be described as a set of elementary predicates whose function is to identify a referent. Notice that the identified referents need not be of the same nature, cfr. the difference between physical object referents and abstract referents. Therefore a noun is used as a NP in a noun phrase in its referential function, whereas it loses its referential function when used as a predicate. Beside these nouns characterized as [+N], there are roots which may be differently either N or V, according to the morphology attached to them, p.ex.: qosol > qosokaa 'the laugh', > qoslay '(I) laughed'.

If we consider the nouns from these roots, they may be distinguished into three subgroups:

a) thematic nouns (TN) which are characterized as [-stative] such as: fadk 'to dig'; kallaa 'to move early in the morning', which can occur as NPs but not as predicates, because the predicate function is performed by the corresponding verbs. When they occur as NPs, they have got an abstract meaning.

b) TNs which are characterized as [+stative] such as: wabaax 'sated

with water', ilbaax 'civilized', which cannot occur as NPs except in the case that, by a kind of semantic shift, they are used to identify a referent which is a physical object, or in the case that an anaphoric or deictic element added to them, by itself creates reference. They usually occur as predicates:

(28) *wabaax ma jaali
* sated not (I) like
(29) *ilbaax waa yimid
*civilized F came

are not acceptable, While the following may be accepted:

(30) ilbaax waa yimid
civilized-that F came
'that civilized (person) has come(I)'
(31) wabaaxii waa yimid
sated-that F came
'that sated (animal) has come(I)'

Certainly acceptable are:

(32) xayawaankaas wabaax waa yahay
animal-that sated F is
'that animal is sated (with water)(I)'
(33) Calii ilbaax wuu yahay
Calii civilized F he is
'C. is civilized(I)'

When used as predicates, these substantives behave syntactically as nouns (i.e. they need the copula, they can be focalized with the focus indicator was cannot precede them as with adjectives):

(34) xayawaankaas wabaax buu ahaa
animal-that sated Fe he was
'that animal was sated (with water)(I)'
(35) Calii ilbaax buu ahaa
Calii civilized Fe he was
'C. was civilized (I)'

When used as predicates, these substantives behave syntactically as nouns (i.e. they need the copula, they can be focalized with the focus indicator was cannot precede them as with adjectives):
c) some of the TMs have come to identify physical objects and as such they behave exactly as nouns characterized as [+N]: abuurka 'seed', magool 'sprout'. These roots may get a derivational suffix which turns them into an abstract noun which can occur as NMs:

(36) wabixid (-da) 'to be sated with water'
    ilbixid (-da) 'to be civilized'
    abuurid (-da) 'to create'
    magoolid (-da) 'to blossom', etc.

Conclusions: The lexicon of the Somali language consists of the following items:

a) a very restricted set of radical adjectives
b) a fairly large set of lexical nouns

c) a set of roots which may be nouns and verbs

From these items the following can be derived through suffixes:

1) verbs and nouns from adjectives
2) verbs and adjectives from lexical nouns
3) abstract nouns from verbs, and verbs from verbs and verbs from nouns and adjectives from verbs.

NOTES

1. The new categorization and its denomination are due to Andrzejewski (1969).
2. The paradigm of the past tense for the verb abano 'to be', is: ab-an, ah-an, ah-an, ah-an, ah-an, ah-an.
3. Derived 'hybrid verbs' (with the exclusion of the radical ones) can also co-occur in the reduplicated form with a singular subject:

   miiska waa xajaban xahay
   table-the-F broken is
   'the table is broken in more than one place'.

   In this case the reduplication conveys the meaning of a state resulting from an action iterated in time or in space.

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- 1978. 'The Sam Languages, a History of Rendille, Boni and Somali'. Afroasiatic Linguistics 6/2.
Robechi-Bricchetti L. 1892. La grammatica somala. Roma.