

The Phonetic Structure of Somali.

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This material is obviously incomplete but is published now in the hope that students of Somali, and all those interested in establishing an orthography for Somali, may find that it throws some light on their special difficulties.

The work is the result of an analysis of the pronunciation of two Somali natives, Mr. Isman Dubet of Adadleh, about 25 miles north-east of Hargeisa, and Mr. Haji Farah of Berbera. During the course of this analysis no reference at all was made to the work of those who have written on the pronunciation of Somali. It was not until my work was finished that I consulted Dr. v. Tiling's phonetic introduction to her Somali Texts. My analysis agrees in the main with that of the sounds she describes there — the plosives and the three fricatives ' , *ħ* and *h*.

The vowel system of Somali is a baffling one. It is difficult in itself, because of the number and nature of its sounds, and it is complicated by the presence of vowel harmony the influence of which should be studied by all those who aspire to speak Somali as a Somali does. This vowel harmony operates not only within words but throws its influence forward and backward into neighbouring words. In this article vowel harmony forms are shown only in the section on Vowel Harmony and in the connected texts. Another disturbing influence on the vowel system is that exerted by certain consonants, particularly those with pharyngeal and glottal elements. The strongest of these are ' and *ħ*; others with less power are *q*, *q*, ' , *r* and *h*. These

S.B.N. - GB: 576.11443.X

Republished in 1964 by Gregg International Publishers Limited
Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., England.

Second Impression 1966

Third Impression 1969

Printed in England

influences¹⁾ make the task of deciding the number and nature of the vowel phonemes of Somali extremely difficult.

Somali has a rich and varied consonant system; and the fact that many of its sounds have important positional variants suggests an even greater number of essential consonants than actually occurs.

Length of both consonant and vowel sounds is important and often significant.

Is Somali a tone language? It is certain that word-tone is immensely important — much more so than stress — and in many cases significant. In the case of my two subjects it is a mistake to attribute this significance to stress; to say, for example, that the difference between 'inan²⁾ (son) and 'inan (daughter) lies in the fact that in the former the stress is on the first syllable, and in the latter on the second. The stress is certainly on the first syllable of 'inan (son); but the important thing is that the pitch of this syllable is fairly high and that of the second syllable relatively low. In 'inan (daughter) the pitch of both syllables is practically mid-level, and the stress of the two syllables about the same³⁾. The main difference between the pronunciation of *gees* (side) and *gèes*²⁾ (horn) is that the pitch of the latter falls while that of the former is level or slightly rising. The modifications which word-tones undergo in connected speech through position and the interplay of one tone upon another must be subjected to a thorough investigation. It may be found on further research that these modifications are governed, as in regular tone languages, by very definite principles, or that they are too irregular to classify.

The Somali language contains 31 phonemes (exclusive of diphthongs), which may be represented by the following letters⁴⁾:

Consonants.

Plosives:	<i>b, t, d, q, k, g, q, ' ,</i>
Affricate:	<i>j</i>
Nasals:	<i>m, n</i>
Lateral:	<i>l</i>
Rolled:	<i>r</i>
Fricatives:	<i>f, s, ʃ, x, h, ' , h</i>
Vowel glides:	<i>w, y</i>

¹⁾ See also pp. 156, 157 for influence of the vowel glides *y* and *w*.

²⁾ The marks, ' and ' , are tone marks. At the same time they show strong stress. For an explanation of their use in this article, see pp. 139—140; 147—8.

³⁾ Nor is the difference in meaning between the two words to be accounted for by a difference in the length of the vowel of the second syllable. There may be a slight difference which is negligible.

⁴⁾ Note. The system of transcription used in this article is that of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, supplemented by *q* and ' and the international phonetic letters *h, æ, œ, y*. Other international phonetic signs are occasionally used to facilitate explanations.

Pure Vowels.

Front	<i>i</i> , short and long	Back	<i>a</i> , short and long
	<i>e</i> , short and long		<i>o</i> , short and long
	<i>ε</i> , short and long		<i>u</i> , short and long
	<i>æ</i> , short and long	Central	<i>œ</i> , short and long
			<i>y</i> , short and long

Long vowels are indicated by double letters: *ii, aa*, etc.

Alternative vowel letters for Orthography.

ae may be used in orthography as an alternative to *æ*, and *aæ* as an alternative to *ææ*, the *e* in such groups being a convention to indicate a closer and more advanced vowel than *a*.

ε may be used in orthography to represent the vowel *e* (not a common sound), thus reserving the familiar letter *e* for the very common sound represented in this article by *ε*.

oe may be used as an alternative to *œ*, and *ooe* to *œœ*, the *e* in such groups indicating closeness and fronting.

ue may be used as an alternative to *y*, and *uee* to *yy*, the *e* indicating closeness and fronting.

Special Capital letters for Orthography.

Ð	for capital	<i>q</i>
Σ	„	<i>ʃ</i>
H	„	<i>h</i>

Diphthongs.

ey, ay, aaw, aw, æw.

Details and Examples of the Sounds.

CONSONANTS.

Consonant Table.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	<i>b</i>		<i>t d</i>		<i>q</i>			<i>k g</i>	<i>q</i>		'
Affricate						<i>j</i>					
Nasal	<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>							
Lateral				<i>l</i>							
Rolled				<i>r</i>							
Fricative		<i>f</i>		<i>s</i>		<i>ʃ</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>ħ ' ,</i>	<i>h</i>
Vowel Glide	<i>w</i>						<i>y</i>	(<i>w</i>)			

I. Plosives.

b. *b* has not much voice initially¹). In a number of kymograph tracings made by Haji Farah, no voice at all is recorded initially. His initial *b* is therefore like a weak unaspirated *p*:

<i>bal</i> but	<i>bóqor</i> king, scarf
<i>bàal</i> feather	<i>bad</i> sea
<i>baq</i> half	<i>basal</i> onion

The following subsidiary members of the phoneme occur and may all be represented by *b*:

(1) A weak kind of *p* with no release before *t*, *k*, *f*, etc.:

<i>dábka</i> the fire
<i>húbka</i> the weapons (general term)
<i>gáéba</i> the respectable person

(2) Voiceless (or with slight voicing) and with no release; or *p*' (i. e. *p* with glottal closure and release), finally²):

<i>qyb</i> burn	<i>laab</i> chest (body)
<i>gæb</i> respectable person	<i>làab</i> bend, fold
<i>qab</i> vain	<i>ròob</i> rain
<i>sab</i> outcast	

(3) Often β when single between vowels, especially after a stressed syllable. Isman Dubet was much more inclined to use β than Haji Farah who generally used voiced *b*:

<i>lába</i> two	<i>díbi</i> ox
<i>qában</i> cheek	

Double *b* also occurs between vowels. This does not sound fully voiced, but tracings made by Haji Farah show full voicing:

<i>gábbal</i> twilight	<i>dabbàal</i> direct (of cattle)
<i>habban</i> straight, good	<i>'abbaan</i> protector
<i>dabbaal</i> swimming	<i>an 'ébbó</i> let me drink

t. *t* is dental (not interdental) and rather strongly aspirated. The phoneme does not occur finally:

<i>toll</i> clan	<i>tuf</i> spit
<i>tiih</i> shower	<i>tíqi</i> she said
<i>tæg</i> valley	<i>'éægta</i> the beacon
<i>tag</i> go away	<i>hórta</i> the beginning, front

d. *d* is dental (not interdental). There is not much voice initially; often none at all:

<i>dææf</i> eye disease	<i>díyg</i> rub (oil) in
<i>dææs</i> shop	<i>díig</i> cock
<i>dyl</i> nostril	<i>dææg</i> green grass
<i>dil</i> kill, beat	<i>dææl</i> fatigue

¹) Isman Dubet's initial *b*, *d*, *g*, *q* are more voiced than Haji Farah's.

²) Haji Farah generally pronounced the sound with no release; often with glottal closure. Isman Dubet generally used *p*'.

The following subsidiary members of the phoneme occur and may all be represented by *d*:

(1) A weak kind of *t* with no release before *k*:

<i>fúudka</i> the soup	<i>qúudka</i> the food
<i>dádka</i> the people	<i>gèedka</i> the tree

(2) Voiceless (or with slight voicing) and with no release; or *t* with glottal closure and release, finally¹):

<i>dàad</i> running water	<i>god</i> dig
after heavy rain	<i>'od</i> voice
<i>rææd</i> footmark	<i>fææd</i> top part of
<i>làad</i> kick	forehead
<i>qàad</i> lift	<i>bad</i> sea

(3) Often δ when single between vowels, especially after a stressed syllable. Isman Dubet used δ fairly frequently; Haji Farah only in a few words (e. g. *'idān* [vessel for incense-burning], *'εεδān* [call to prayer]):

<i>bádag</i> goose	<i>magaaláda</i> the city
<i>dádab</i> screen	<i>dabooláda</i> the covers
<i>'ádæw</i> enemy	<i>múda'</i> fork
<i>dæeráda</i> the gazelle	<i>'ádag</i> firm (of things)
<i>habafída</i> Abyssinian	

Double *d* also occurs between vowels. This does not sound fully voiced, but there is probably often weak voicing throughout²):

<i>sáddeh</i> three	<i>'addoon</i> slave (f.)
<i>siddèed</i> eight	<i>ríddu</i> the action of
<i>'addāan</i> white	throwing a spear
<i>bádda</i> the sea	<i>qúdde</i> large wooden spoon
<i>fæædda</i> the top part of	<i>sóddog</i> father-in-law
the forehead	<i>soddoh</i> mother-in-law

q. The symbol *q* represents in Somali a sound which is very different from ordinary retroflex *d*. In the first place it is not really retroflex at all, but generally post-alveolar, and in place of articulation thus resembles the "supradental" sound of *rd* of Swedish *ord* (word), *hård* (hard), and also the "retroflex" or "cerebral" *d* of northern Indian languages which, in reality, is made just behind the alveolar ridge. (The symbol *q* is, by the way, a symbol of the Swedish Dialect Alphabet, and is there used to represent the sound of *rd*.) The Somali sound is not so easy as this. The occlusion is voiced initially. The sound is produced with the same pharyngeal contraction and the same raising of the larynx as is necessary in the articulation of *'* and *h*.

¹) Haji Farah generally pronounced the sound with no release. Isman Dubet generally used ejective *t'*.

²) I have a tracing of the word *soddoh* (mother-in-law) made by Haji Farah which shows the *d*'s to be entirely without voice.

If this contraction is relaxed and the larynx moved down again at the same time as the tip of the tongue is removed from the back of the teeth ridge, there is a momentary rushing in of air giving the sound an implosive quality. This quality was often very noticeable in Haji Farah's pronunciation when the sound occurred initially, and in a number of kymograph tracings he made it is clearly indicated. As it was not always evident, it is perhaps unessential; though it was interesting to note that Haji Farah always accepted from me an initial *q* made with this implosive quality.

Examples:

<i>qab</i> truth	<i>qaar</i> oath
<i>qeh</i> say	<i>qiiig</i> blood
<i>qidiid</i> sweat	<i>qiiub</i> point, make sharp
<i>qann</i> direction	<i>qa'</i> rob, fall
<i>qool</i> big cloud	<i>qab'aal</i> miser
<i>qul</i> earth	<i>qa'an</i> felled tree for
<i>qeer</i> tall	barring entrance to
<i>qiiyg</i> dip fingers in butter	enclosure
or milk and suck or	
lick them	

The following subsidiary members occur and may all be represented by *q*:

1) A weak kind of *t* with no release before *k*:

<i>baqka</i> the half
<i>qiiqka</i> the cancerous wound
<i>naaqka</i> the leather bucket (for watering cattle)
<i>baqaaqka</i> the happiness, the joy

2) Voiceless (or with slight voicing) and with no release; or *t'* with glottal closure and release, finally¹⁾:

<i>haawq</i> thin stick	<i>fiiid</i> comb, blow with clenched fist
<i>baq</i> half	<i>fiiidaq</i> blows with clenched fist
<i>hiq</i> fasten	<i>miq</i> fruit (one)
<i>gææq</i> reach	<i>yiiid</i> call
<i>gææq</i> he reached (short form)	<i>waq</i> dry, open out (to dry)
<i>faq</i> hollow out	<i>gabaq</i> daughter
<i>fiiid</i> rib	<i>jiiid</i> lean (meat)

3) Fully voiced *r* (flapped *r*) when single between vowels. For this the tip of the tongue is raised to a point just behind the teeth-ridge and, without touching at this point, is *immediately* lowered, the under part of the tip striking the teeth-ridge in its descent:

¹⁾ Haji Farah pronounced the sound with no release; Isman Dubet generally used ejective *t'*.

tiiid she said
'iidi I said
gæædey I reached
yiiidaq I called
gaadi carriage
fiiido ribs
qaqoon bark of tree
miqo plural of *miq*

qaaqab dream
baqaaq happiness, joy
fallaado arrows
hiiido Somali wooden dish
ballaadan wide
haqimo dinner
haqaw laggard (camel)
ninka haqay the man remaining
ragga haqay the men remaining

Double *q*, fully voiced, also occurs between vowels and may be represented by *qq*:

*gææqqeey*¹⁾ she reached
baaqdaq she searched
gabaaqda the girl
fiiidqa the rib
fiiidqi sitting

miiisa haqdaq the part remaining
naagta haqdaq the woman remaining
wææhda haqdaq the quarter remaining

qaaqdaab big stone
qaaqdan taste, flavour

k. Aspirated rather strongly. The phoneme does not occur finally:

<i>kol</i> time, once	<i>kal</i> year
<i>kiiif</i> bag, (draw top)	<i>kaaal</i> one who gives marriage present
<i>kiiin</i> bring, fetch	<i>giyirka</i> the marriage
<i>kuf</i> fall (while running or walking)	<i>hiibka</i> the weapons
	<i>'aaqalka</i> the house

g. *g* has not much voice initially. In a number of kymograph tracings made by Haji Farah no voice at all is recorded initially:

<i>gææd</i> reach	<i>gaed</i> hole
<i>gall</i> pool	<i>gaeg</i> one side of camel skin
<i>gal</i> enter	<i>giyirr</i> marriage

The following subsidiary members of the phoneme occur and may all be represented by *g*:

1) A weak kind of *k* with no release before *t*:

<i>naagta</i> the woman	<i>'aaegta</i> the beacon
<i>daaegta</i> the pain ²⁾	<i>qiiigta</i> the ear

2) Voiceless (or with slight voicing) and with no release; or *k* with glottal closure and release, finally³⁾:

<i>tææg</i> raise	<i>tiiyg</i> robber
<i>tag</i> go	<i>naag</i> woman
<i>dææg</i> green grass	

3) Sometimes *y* when single between vowels, especially after a stressed syllable. Isman Dubet used *y* much more frequently than Haji Farah:

¹⁾ See footnote 1, page 154.

²⁾ Pain which recurs after wound from blow.

³⁾ Haji Farah generally pronounced the sound with no release; Isman Dubet used *k'*.

'an 'éego let me look	sagaal nine
'an tágo let me go	nín rága brave man

Double *g* also occurs between vowels and may be represented by *gg*. Partially or fully voiced:

hággá the hole	rágga the men
dàæggá the green grass	haggee where?
týggá the robber	hággan here
hágga the place	bádagga the goose

q. *q* is made by raising the back of the tongue to the extreme back of the soft palate. At the same time there appears to be pharyngeal modification. The symbol *q* suggests a voiceless sound; but Somali *q* must be classed, not with *t* and *k*, but with *b*, *d*, *q* and *g*, since in the matter of voicing and lack of any aspiration it behaves in the same way as these sounds. The symbol *g* would be more suggestive of the nature of the sound; but *q* is a more convenient symbol.

Haji Farah's sound had very little voice initially; often none at all:

qárbed leather bucket for carrying water	qùus dive
qaan debt	qósol laughter
qahwe coffee	qab proud
god dig	qòof mix
	qáalin young camel (m.)

The following are the subsidiary members of Haji Farah's *q* phoneme:

1) Voiceless (or with slight voicing) and with no release, finally:

qìiq smoke	faq consultation
mìiq thread	bàaq call, signal
bùuq clamour	haq truth

2) Often *κ*, i. e. weakened to the corresponding voiced fricative, when single between vowels, especially after a stressed syllable. In careful speech, however, Haji Farah preferred *g* (partially voiced) in intervocalic positions:

baqal mule (f)	bóqor king, scarf
'áqal house	máqal listen
	bóqol hundred

Double *q* also occurs between vowels and may be represented by *qq*. This, in Haji Farah's pronunciation, was either partially voiced or voiceless. The tracing he made of the word *jáqqa* (the consultation) shows no voice in the *q*'s:

háqqa the truth	mìiqqa the thread
dúqqa the old person	

Isman Dubet pronounced *q* as an affricate in initial and final positions. Initially it was partially voiced *gκ* the fricative element

being weak. Finally it was voiceless: *qχ* or *q'*; medially *κ* after a stressed syllable, generally *g* in other intervocalic positions.

' Ordinary glottal stop.

It appears to be nearly always possible to use ' before a vowel in an initial syllable and it need not therefore be represented in this position. In cases where it should not be inserted, e. g. in 'orod oo (and run) the two words could be written as one: 'orodoo, or with a linking mark: 'orod_oo.

Medially:

dæ'da the age	ló'o or lo'yaal herds of cattle
gó'a the loincloth	bí'i erase, blot out

Finally:

de' it rained	dæ' age
wææ' not to find	go' loincloth (five yards)
lo' herd of cattle (cows)	

II. Affricate

j. *j* is made with the tip of the tongue against the lower teeth; a closure is formed between the blade of the tongue and the back of the teeth-ridge, and the rest of the tongue is raised towards the palate. During the closure there is little or no voice when the sound is initial, and very little when medial. When the stop is released the corresponding fricative is heard. Haji Farah's *j* sounds rather like English *tʃ* (of *cheap*); Isman Dubet's is more voiced and is thus more like English *dʒ* (of *joke*). Somali *j* does not occur finally.

Initial:

jíirr rat	jèes very small village (two or three houses)
jirr heavy rain	
jir protect	jææg stop, remain
jìid pull along	jìid lean (meat)
jid flesh, body	jææh face

Medial:

'ajjin dough	qanjíido pinch
'anjíid scar on cheek	hagáaji make straight, right
'antúuji give a mouthful	hajiin itching

III. Nasals.

m. Normal. Does not occur finally in Somali words. Vowels preceding and following are very noticeably nasalised. This nasalisation is not significant, and it is therefore not necessary to mark it.

n. Finally in many words, generally after a long vowel, a very weak variety of *n* is used and the preceding vowel is nasalised. One has the impression that this final *n* will soon disappear and that there will be nothing but the nasalised vowel to tell of its previous existence:

sòon fast (in Lent)
siin gift
haan vessel of bark for milk
 and water
toon garlic
'òon thirst

qìn veer round, shift (of a
 vessel)
agòon orphan (m.)
sùun leather strap
saan skin, hide (of camel,
 cow)

Finally in many words, generally after a short vowel in a stressed syllable, the *n* is long and strong:

<i>din</i> lessen (of liquids)	<i>ballin</i> appointment
<i>min</i> big basket of dates	<i>fan</i> five
<i>wan</i> ram	<i>gan</i> aim with bow and arrow
<i>nin</i> man	<i>san</i> leather
<i>fin</i> pimple	<i>qan</i> drink (milk or water).
<i>'arrin</i> matter, subject	

There also occurs finally voiced *n* followed by voiceless *n* (*n̥*) which appears to be significant. This group may be written *nn̥* or *nh* or *nn*. The latter is used in this article with the convention that when double letters are used finally the second one represents a voiceless sound; thus *sann* is to be read as *san^{n̥}*.

Examples:

<i>sann</i> nose	<i>gann</i> horse's mane, wiry hair
<i>san</i> leather	<i>gan</i> aim with bow and arrow
<i>qann</i> side	<i>mann</i> blossom
<i>qan</i> drink (milk or water)	

When a termination is added to the words ending in *nn*, a single voiced *n* only is used:

sanann noses
sánka the nose
qánkaa that side

Both Isman Dubet and Haji Farah use voiceless *n* in a certain number of words; but since it occurs only in final positions it may prove to have little importance.

Double *n* (fully voiced) may occur medially:

weynu qábannay we went
weynu só'onnay we walked
dinned cat

n is pronounced *m* before *b*; *ŋ* before *g*, *k*; *ɲ* (uvular nasal) before *q*. It is unnecessary to show this in the orthography:

<i>'an báa^{qo}</i> Let me search	<i>waan kúfi</i> I shall fall
<i>nín bà^a yiqi...</i> A man said..	<i>'an gálo</i> Let me go in
<i>búnka</i> the coffee	<i>waan qóofi</i> I shall mix

IV. Lateral.

l. The resonance of *l* varies according to the quality of the neighbouring vowel; it is never very "clear". Initially and medially the sound is always fully voiced:

<i>laan</i> branch	<i>lìqyl</i> pearl
<i>làad</i> kick	<i>'ulus</i> heavy
<i>laf</i> bone	<i>galal</i> pools
<i>liq</i> swallow (action)	<i>halo</i> big she-camels
<i>lèef</i> lick	<i>'ilin</i> dwarf (m.)
<i>lo'</i> herd of cattle (cows)	<i>qáalin</i> young camel (m.)

Final *l* is often partially voiceless (*l̥*), but except in a few words (see paragraph below) it does not appear to be necessary to pronounce final *l* as *l̥*¹. It may be represented by *l*:

<i>fabèel</i> leopard	<i>yèel</i> vessel for water; do
<i>dabòol</i> cover	<i>gàal</i> unbeliever
<i>nàyl</i> lamb (m.)	<i>fanqàal</i> wooden spoon
<i>'èel</i> well (water)	<i>bàal</i> feather
<i>gèel</i> group of camels	

Finally in many words, generally after a short vowel in a stressed syllable, the *l* is long and strong:

<i>dyl</i> nostril	<i>sol</i> grill
<i>kul</i> hot	<i>fal</i> act, do
<i>dil</i> kill	<i>hal</i> she-camel
<i>qil</i> peel	<i>gal</i> enter
<i>kol</i> time	<i>tol</i> sew

There also occurs finally voiced *l* followed by voiceless *l* (*l̥*), this *l̥* being significant. Final voiceless *l* may be written *l̥* or *h* or *l*. The latter symbol is used in this article with the convention that when *ll* is written finally, the second *l*-sound is voiceless; thus *fall* is to be read as *fal^{l̥}*:

fall hypnotise (cf. *fal* act, do)
hall small pieces of anything
 (cf. *hal* she-camel)
gall pool (cf. *gal* enter)
toll clan (cf. *tol* sew)²

When a termination is added to the words ending in *ll*, a single voiced *l* only is used:

<i>gálka</i> the pool	<i>tólka</i> the clan
<i>galal</i> pools	<i>total</i> clans

¹) Isman Dubet pronounced final *l* as *l̥* in all the words given in this paragraph. Haji Farah and one other native I heard pronounced it *l*.

²) Both Isman Dubet and Haji Farah make these differences. But since the unvoicing occurs only in final positions it may not be very important.

Double *l* (fully voiced) may occur medially:

<i>dallaan</i> young ones (children and animals)	<i>'illæw</i> forget
<i>ballin</i> appointment	<i>ballaad</i> wide
<i>bállì</i> Somali reservoir	<i>jalliid</i> half of tooth (broken vertically)
<i>jállaaq</i> one eighth	<i>qúllaħ</i> abscess
<i>jallaaq</i> arrow	<i>'illo</i> put your shoes on
<i>sallaan</i> ladder	<i>hangállo</i> hopping(?)
<i>kelli</i> kidney	

V. Rolled.

r. Rolled lingual.

Initially in a word *r* appears to be always strong and practically voiceless. It may be represented simply by *r*:

<i>ràa'</i> accompany	<i>ræəd</i> footmark
<i>ròob</i> rain	<i>rah</i> frog

Medially there exist *r* and *rr*.

a) *r*. Kymograph tracings show this to be a voiced one-tap *r*:

<i>mareen</i> path	<i>'áaro</i> spider
(generally in a	<i>'aruur</i> children
<i>wáran</i> spear [wood]	<i>ræero</i> villages
<i>géri</i> giraffe	<i>máro</i> loincloth (10 yards)
<i>geeri</i> death	<i>béri</i> year ago
<i>'iio</i> fog, mist	

Single intervocalic *r* must be distinguished from single intervocalic *q* (i. e. from *ɾ*). Compare *tíri* (count) with *tíqí* (she said).

b) *rr*. These sound partially voiceless, but kymographic tracings show voicing throughout. The voice is probably obscured by the breathiness which accompanies the sound. A series of clean-cut taps with strong voicing throughout does not produce at all the right effect and is not accepted as correct:

<i>'arrin</i> matter, subject	<i>'árrab</i> tongue
<i>gorraħ</i> sun	<i>harràad</i> thirst
<i>bérri</i> land (cf. <i>béri</i> a year ago)	<i>'irro</i> grey beard, grey hair
<i>warran</i> tell the news (cf. <i>wáran</i> spear)	<i>ħerrib</i> wisdom

Finally there occur

a) Practically fully voiced *r* (with four or five taps) after short vowels:

<i>war</i> pool of water	<i>mar</i> pass
<i>jir</i> protect	<i>fur</i> open
<i>gar</i> case (law)	

b) A shorter *r* (about three taps) practically unvoiced, after long vowels:

gỳyr shift

sàar put high

qaar big heavy stick

ræer village

ròor run

jiir upward slope

dabèer donkey (m.)

Both these *r*'s, (a) and (b), may be represented by *r*.

c) Very long *r* (nine or ten taps) after both long and short vowels. After short vowels the sound is voiceless during the latter half of its length. After long vowels it gives the impression of being entirely without voice.

This long *r* could be written *rr*, *rh* or *rr*. The latter is used in this article with the convention that when two *r*'s are used finally the second one represents a voiceless sound; thus *marr* is to be read as *marɾ*. This length of *r* is significant in all the words I have collected:

<i>marr</i> one time (cf. <i>mar</i> pass)
<i>sàarr</i> fit (cf. <i>sàar</i> put high)
<i>garr</i> plait (cf. <i>gar</i> case (law))
<i>qàarr</i> some (cf. <i>qaar</i> heavy stick)
<i>bèerr</i> liver (cf. <i>bæer</i> field, garden)
<i>furr</i> cork (cf. <i>fur</i> open)
<i>jarr</i> steep cliff (cf. <i>jar</i> cut)
<i>gỳyrr</i> marriage (cf. <i>gỳyr</i> shift)
<i>'irr</i> sky (cf. <i>'ir</i> food in stomach)
<i>warr</i> news (cf. <i>war</i> pool of water)
<i>jiirr</i> rat (cf. <i>jiir</i> upward slope)
<i>jirr</i> heavy rain (cf. <i>jir</i> protect)
<i>ròorr</i> kind of lizard (cf. <i>ròor</i> run)
<i>'áwarr</i> one-eyed person (cf. <i>'áwar</i> wound)

When a termination is added to the words ending in *rr*, a single voiced *r* only is used:

<i>gárka</i> the plait	<i>gárta</i> the case
<i>garar</i> plaits	<i>garo</i> cases

Although final *rr* is significant in the case of some uninflected words, its occurrence may be found to have very little importance in the language.

VI. Fricatives.

f, *s* and *ʃ* are often pronounced long and with very strong breath-force. I have not yet found words in which this length and strength is significant. For *s* and *ʃ* the tip of the tongue is against the lower teeth and the sounds are articulated with the blade.

x. Occurs in Arabic words only:

<i>xal</i> vinegar	<i>xàyl</i> young ass
<i>xamàar</i> gambling	<i>xamiis</i> Thursday

h. Initial (normal, as in English):

<i>hoos</i> underneath, below	<i>hub</i> weapons (general term)
<i>hor</i> beginning	<i>habàas</i> dust
<i>hæg</i> hole	

Medial (voiced):

<i>dúhur</i> just after noon	<i>báhal</i> wild beast
<i>rahyo</i> frogs	<i>wáhan</i> melancholy
<i>qahwe</i> coffee	

Final:

<i>qesh</i> say	<i>baabah</i> empty
<i>rah</i> frog	<i>jææh</i> face
<i>soddoh</i> mother-in-law	<i>tàah</i> groan, moan

Words often 'lose' their final *h* in the course of connected speech.

h̥. Voiceless pharyngeal fricative. *h̥* is pronounced with the vocal cords wide apart as for ordinary *h*: but the air-current does not pass freely through the pharynx as it does for *h*. Two essential elements of the articulation of *h̥* appear to be

- 1) a raising of the larynx,
- 2) contraction of the pharyngeal muscles¹⁾.

These conditions lead to a narrowing of the pharyngeal passage and the setting up of a very special kind of friction there, as the air-current passes through.

An X-ray photograph of Haji Farah's throat during the pronunciation of *h̥*²⁾ shows the larynx-raising to be appreciably more than for the Somali vowel *a*²⁾. Pharyngeal contraction is also indicated in the photograph by the position of the epiglottis which is squeezed back, narrowing the pharyngeal passage.

Examples.

Initial:

<i>hàwq</i> thin stick	<i>haq</i> truth
<i>haq</i> steal	<i>héeqo</i> Somali dish
<i>h̥il</i> shame	<i>héro</i> enclosure
<i>h̥id</i> fasten	<i>h̥errib</i> wisdom
<i>h̥yn</i> bad	<i>harrágo</i> smartness, fashion

Medial:

<i>wáhar</i> baby goat (m.)	<i>maḥày tidi?</i> What did she say?
<i>aḥad</i> Sunday	<i>wáha(a)n</i> I

Final:

<i>r̥iḥ</i> push	<i>f̥uḥ</i> mist
<i>t̥iḥ</i> shower	<i>waḥ</i> thing
<i>diḥ</i> dry bed of river	<i>gorraḥ</i> sun
<i>liḥ</i> six	<i>lib̥æḥ</i> lion
<i>r̥uḥ</i> life, soul	<i>q̥agaḥ</i> stone

‘. Voiced pharyngeal fricative.

An X-ray photograph of ‘ shows that this sound has, in a greater degree, the pharyngeal contraction characteristic of *h̥*: there is shown a greater raising of the larynx than for *h̥*, and a greater narrowing behind the epiglottis¹⁾. The voicing is intermittent.

Examples.

Initial:

<i>‘abàad</i> grunting noise of camel	<i>‘æb</i> drink
<i>‘iil</i> anger	<i>‘y̥d</i> cattle (general term)
<i>‘iir‘iir</i> stagger	<i>‘ulus</i> heavy
<i>‘iir</i> buttermilk	<i>‘áwo</i> night, luck, girl's name
<i>‘irr</i> sky	<i>‘áfo</i> supper
<i>‘eel</i> well (water)	<i>‘aano</i> milk
<i>‘od</i> voice	<i>‘áawa</i> to-night
<i>‘un</i> eat	<i>‘ásar</i> afternoon
<i>‘addàan</i> white	<i>‘ádæw</i> enemy

Medial:

<i>gá‘an</i> elephant's trunk	<i>sá‘a</i> the cow
<i>qab‘aal</i> miser	<i>gúrra‘a</i> the wrong
<i>dawá‘o</i> (also <i>da‘áwo</i>) fox	<i>arba‘a</i> Wednesday
(general name)	<i>hàwd b̥u ‘ú ka‘ay</i> he went to the
<i>ma‘aan</i> sweet	north
<i>na‘as</i> silly	<i>só‘od</i> walk (noun)

Final:

<i>gúrra‘</i> wrong (noun)	<i>sa‘</i> cow
<i>dææ‘</i> belch	<i>qa‘</i> rob, fall
<i>dáwa‘</i> male fox	<i>qúfa‘</i> cough
<i>ràa‘</i> accompany	<i>múda‘</i> fork
<i>‘u kε‘</i> he got up	

VII. Vowel Glides

<i>w</i>	<i>wiil</i> boy	<i>waab</i> shed, hovel
	<i>wææ‘</i> not to find	<i>wan</i> ram
	<i>waḥ</i> something	<i>dawá‘o</i> fox
	<i>wad</i> drive (camel, vehicle, etc.)	

¹⁾ It is probably about the same as for Southern English *æ*. I have taught *h̥* by asking the student to make *æ* with very exaggerated effort and then to substitute breath for voice.

¹⁾ Both experienced in the act of retching.

²⁾ Taken in the Department of Anatomy at University College, London. Photographs showing the articulation of ‘ and *a* were also taken. These photographs are reproduced in *Le Maître Phonétique*, January, 1934.

The symbol *w* is also used to represent the second element of certain diphthongs. (See pages 136—7).

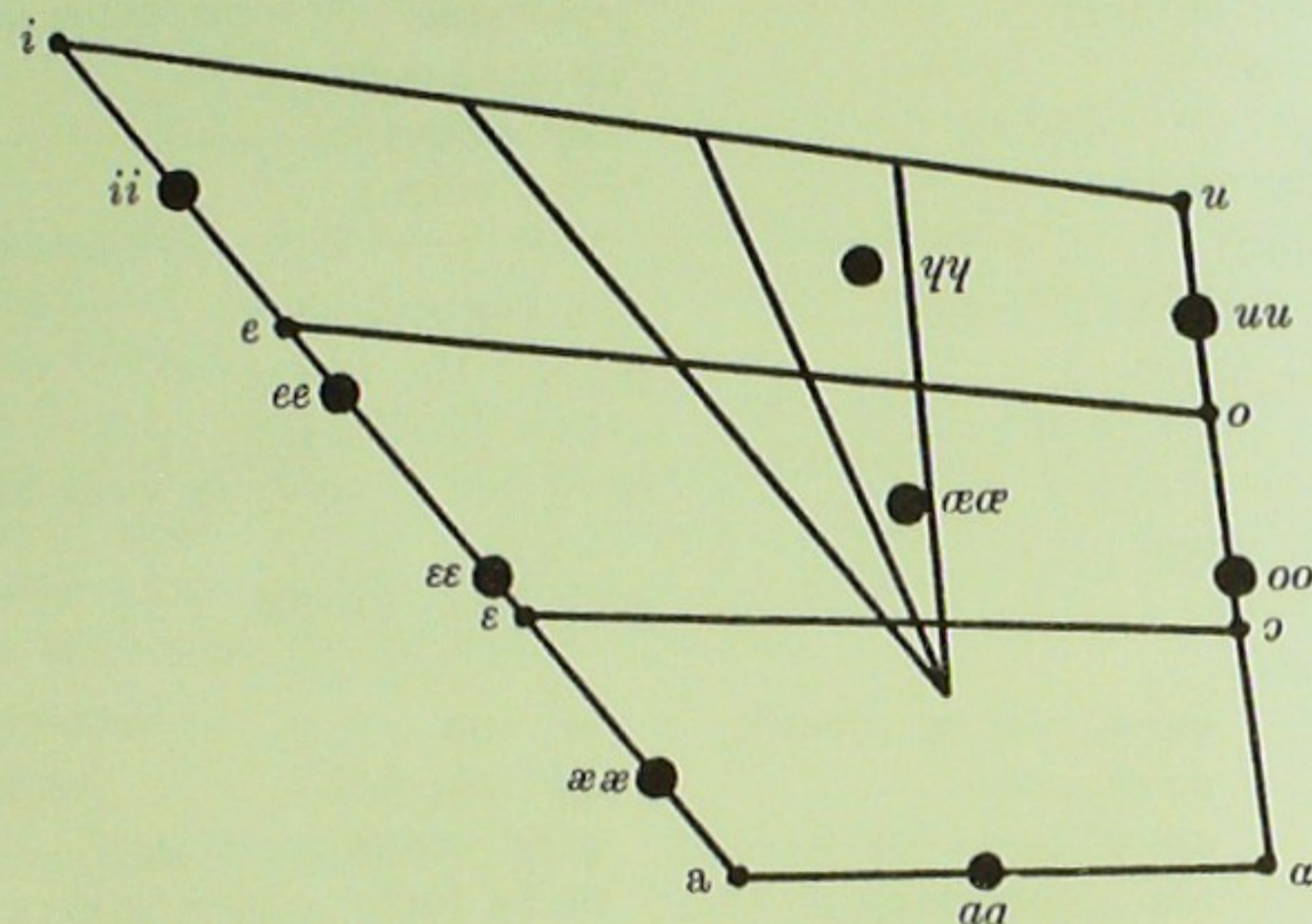
<i>y</i>	<i>yèed</i> call	<i>yar</i> little
	<i>yidi</i> he said	<i>yo</i> and
	<i>yèel</i> obey, do	

The symbol *y* is also used to represent the second element of certain diphthongs. (See page 136).

VOWELS

All vowels are nasalized in the neighbourhood of nasal consonants.

For the help those who know the Cardinal vowel system the approximate tongue positions of the long vowel phonemes of Somali are here shown in relation to the positions of the Cardinal vowels. The Somali vowel positions are shown by large dots, the Cardinal by small ones:



It may be pointed out here in defence of the inclusion of *e* and *æ* (and also of *æ* and *y*) among the essential vowels of Somali that neither vowel harmony nor the influence of neighbouring consonant sounds can account for the occurrence of these vowels in monosyllabic words pronounced in isolation; the fact that *e* can occur under exactly the same conditions as *ε*, *æ* as *a*, *æ* as *o* and *y* as *u*, must be regarded as proof that these pairs of vowels belong to different phonemes. They should, therefore, even in the broadest transcription, be represented by separate symbols. The fact also that suffixes, verbal inflexions, etc., are pronounced with front or central vowels after *e*, *æ*, *æ* and *y* and

with retracting vowels after *ε*, *a*, *o* and *u* (see Section on Vowel Harmony) adds further support to the opinion that each of these vowels should be regarded as a separate phoneme.

I. Pure Vowels

1. Front.

i. Occurs long and short. Never very close. Varies considerably according to nature of neighbouring consonants. E. g. in *‘iil* (anger), the vowel is more open than in *siiḡ* (antelope); in *qiiḡ* (smoke) and in *‘iir* (buttermilk), where an influencing consonant occurs on either side, the vowel is more open still: it is, in fact, like a retracted *e*. The sound *q* also has a slightly lowering effect. When the vowel is followed by *q* or *h* there is a very noticeable central glide on to the consonant:

Examples of *ii*:

<i>qiiḡ</i> blood	<i>wiil</i> boy
<i>qiiḡ</i> hand, pass over	<i>riih</i> push
<i>diiḡ</i> tortoise	<i>tiih</i> shower
<i>qiiḡ</i> smoke	<i>kiiḡ</i> bag (with draw top)
<i>miḡ</i> thread	<i>jiiḡ</i> drag along
<i>‘iir</i> buttermilk	<i>diiḡ</i> cock
<i>‘iil</i> anger	

Examples of *i*:

<i>lis</i> sharpen (razor, knife, etc.)	<i>liḡ</i> swallow (action)
<i>bil</i> month	<i>liḡ</i> six
<i>dir</i> send	<i>riḡ</i> goat (f.)
<i>dig</i> put down, put on	<i>riḡ</i> tear, pluck (bird)
<i>dil</i> kill	<i>sid</i> carry
<i>qil</i> peel	<i>‘irr</i> sky
<i>hil</i> shame	<i>mid</i> single, one
<i>qir</i> acknowledge	<i>jid</i> body

e. Occurs long and short. The vowel is closer than the Southern English vowel of *egg*.

Examples of *ee*:

<i>gèed</i> tree	<i>haggee</i> where?
<i>gees</i> side, direction	<i>hees</i> he sang (short form)
<i>gès</i> horn	<i>seeg</i> he missed (short form)
<i>gèel</i> group of camels	<i>siddèed</i> eight
<i>habèen</i> ¹⁾ night	<i>geedo</i> pasture

¹⁾ *habèen* is also heard.

Examples of *e*:

<i>ded</i> cover person with	<i>deg</i> ear
blanket	<i>leg</i> under part of sheep
<i>deg</i> alight	<i>de'</i> it rained (short form)

ε. Occurs long and short. Has about the same value as the vowel of French *bête*.

Examples of *εε*:

<i>fεεd</i> rib	<i>lεεf</i> lick
<i>fεεd</i> blow with clenched fist, comb	<i>sεεb</i> oar
<i>hεεs</i> song (cf. <i>hees</i> , he sang)	<i>mεεl</i> place, part
<i>hεεs</i> sing	<i>fεεg</i> tell
<i>kεεn</i> bring	<i>yεεd</i> call
<i>jεεb</i> pocket	<i>'εεg</i> see, look at
<i>sεεg</i> miss (cf. <i>seeg</i> , he missed)	<i>'εεl</i> well (water)
<i>yεεl</i> obey, do	<i>rεεr</i> village
<i>jεεs</i> very small village (two or three houses)	

Examples of *ε*:

<i>géri</i> giraffe	<i>keli</i> single
<i>qεh</i> centre	<i>héro</i> enclosure
<i>qεh</i> say	<i>qahwe</i> coffee
<i>sáddεh</i> three	<i>bélel</i> flame
<i>berri</i> tomorrow	

æ. *æ* resembles the vowel of Southern English *man*. It occurs long and short.

Examples of *ææ*:

<i>'ææd</i> well, loud, strong	<i>wææ'</i> not to find
<i>dææn</i> one side of jaw	<i>rææg</i> be late, delay
<i>dææf</i> bottom	<i>rææg</i> he was late (short form)
<i>dææf</i> eye disease	<i>rææ'</i> he accompanied (short form)
<i>tææg</i> raise, put upright	<i>nææh</i> he became fat (short form)
<i>tææg</i> he raised (short form)	<i>wææh</i> a quarter
<i>rææd</i> footmark	<i>gææd</i> he attacked (short form)
<i>dææs</i> shop	<i>jææs</i> axe
<i>gææd</i> reach	<i>dææd</i> fatigue
<i>gæædey</i> ¹⁾ I reached (cf. <i>gaadi</i> ,	

Examples of *æ*:

<i>dæ</i> age, it rains
<i>'æb</i> drink
<i>'æd</i> piece of meat

¹⁾ See footnote 1, page 154.

a. *a* is really intermediate between front and back. It is a much more common vowel than *æ*. Long *a* has a more advanced tongue position than the vowel of English *calm*; short *a* generally resembles the *a* of English *gun*¹⁾. In very weak syllables it is *a*-like²⁾.

Examples of *aa*:

<i>bàad</i> search	<i>laan</i> branch
<i>gaadi</i> carriage	<i>làn</i> small tree
<i>naag</i> woman	<i>ràa'</i> accompany
<i>sàab</i> wooden basket work	<i>nàah</i> get fat
<i>saan</i> hide of cows, camels	<i>màag</i> aggravate
<i>gàad</i> attack unexpectedly	<i>laab</i> chest
<i>islàn</i> old man	<i>haad</i> down (fine hair)
<i>taag</i> strength	<i>hagàaf</i> plough
<i>waab</i> shed, hovel	<i>habàas</i> dust
<i>dàaq</i> graze	

Examples of *a*:

<i>qab</i> truth	<i>wad</i> drive
<i>bal</i> but	<i>wah</i> something
<i>dab</i> fire, snare (for animals)	<i>bad</i> sea
<i>naq</i> green grass	<i>baq</i> half
<i>sab</i> outcast	<i>xal</i> vinegar
<i>sann</i> nose	<i>laf</i> bone
<i>tag</i> go away	<i>'af</i> mouth, language
<i>qann</i> side, direction	<i>raq</i> corpse
<i>qab</i> vain, bang	<i>rag</i> men, masculine sex
<i>gal</i> enter	<i>máqal</i> listen
<i>gall</i> pool	<i>bádag</i> goose
<i>faq</i> consultation	<i>nabad</i> peace
<i>dad</i> people	<i>galab</i> evening
<i>'ad</i> white	<i>basal</i> onion

^{o3)}. Rather closer than the normal vowel of English *saw*. Occurs long and short.

¹⁾ There are exceptions to this. For example in the following words I have noted that the sound is short but has the *quality* of long *a*. The use of the more open sound is probably due to the influence of a neighbouring glottal or pharyngeal consonant (*'*, *'*, *h*, *h*): *'ádi* (sheep and goats). (The *d* is probably not the influencing sound, since in *baq* (half), *gabaq* (daughter), *waq* (dry), *qann* (direction), etc., the *a* is *a*-like). *'arag* (see). (Here the first *a* is *a*-like, the second *a* or *æ*-like. The *r* is probably not the influencing sound, since in *mar* (pass), *gar* (law-case), *war* (pool of water), *wáran* (spear), etc., the *a* is *a*-like). *'ad* (white), *'asar* (afternoon), *'áfo* (supper), *hag* (place), *had* (steal), *haq* (truth), *hagàaf* (plough), *wah* (thing), *lah* (ewe), *hal* (she-camel), *haq* (remainder), *haddii* (if).

²⁾ *ə* is the symbol for the final vowel of *banana*.

³⁾ The familiar symbol *o* is used, though *ɔ* would be a more accurate representation. (See diagram, page 131.)

Examples of oo:

lòoh writing board
'òon thirst
ròob rain
qool lateral incisor tooth
qòol very big cloud
tòos get up from a low place,
wake up (cf. *tææs* he got up)

dòob youth (unmarried)
'agòon orphan (m.)
qòof mix
bòob grab
mòod useful property (such
as money, furniture)
ròon good

Examples of o:

go' loincloth (five yards)
hor beginning, front
lo' herd of cattle
tol sew
toll clan

'ol enemy
qod dig (cf. *qæd*, he dug)
qósol laughter
bóqol hundred

u. Long *u* resembles a very close back *o*, except after *y* and *w* when it is more *u*-like. Care must be taken to make short *u* more retracted than the vowel of English *put*.

Examples of uu:

dùul fly (cf. *dùyl*, attack)
gùur travel by night
qùus dive
qùuñ jist, pith, marrow
rùuñ soul, life
fùuñ mist

bùuq clamour
sùun leather strap, belt
kuul necklace
wuu he
ayyùu he

Examples of u:

bun coffee
dul top, above (cf. *dyl*,
nostril)
sug clear (cf. *syg*, wait,
he cleared)
tuf spit (cf. *tyf*, he spat)

dul earth, ground
tus show
ruh shake
kuf fall (cf. *kyf*, he fell)
'ulus heavy
sun poison

3. Central Rounded Vowels.

æ. Occurs long and short. Resembles the Swedish vowel of *kung*, but is more open and a little more central than this. Some Southern English people use a very similar vowel as the first element of their diphthong of *load*, *mode*, etc.

Examples of ææ:

bææd jump
hææg evil wish
dææg green grass
jææg wait
mææd think (cf. *mòod*, useful
property, e. g. furniture,
money)

'ææg beacon
fææd forehead
mææg careless, ignorant

Examples of æ:

fæg far
gæb respectable person,
special tree
hæg hole

ræg turn over
tæg valley
bæg approve, agree
mæg agree

γ. Occurs long and short. Intermediate between the French vowels of *vous* and *vu*. Similar to the sound of *u* in Norwegian *hus*, but more open.

Examples of γγ:

lγγl pearl
tγγg robber
dγγl attack (cf. *dùul*, fly)
dγγg rub (oil) in; old (of
things)
dγγg dip fingers in butter
or milk and suck or lick them

lγγf slice
gγγr shift (cf. *gùur*, travel by
night)
tγγl heap up
rγγg knee-cap
'γγd cattle (general term)
dγγ(h) skin garment

Examples of γ:

dyl nostril
dγγ good marksmanship
gyb burn
syg wait

tyf he spat (short form)
hyf he missed (short form)
hyn bad

II. Diphthongs.

ey. *wèyn* big
wèyl calf
weyd thin, weak

dèyn debt(?)
wey égeysey she was
looking

ay. *nàyl* lamb (m.)
gábay sing
káalay come

wàan árkay I saw
wàan máqlay I heard
wàan háday I remained

aaw. *'àawr* camel (m.)
'aaw plait of basket work
made from palm leaves
haawl hard work
dàawr take care of, leave
some, Look!

dàawrr several
'aawl gazelle
'aaws grass
qaaw sharp noise made by
striking repeatedly
qàawll command, will
dàaw way, path

aw. This is a very different sound from *aaw*. The first element is *a*-like and the glide from this position is made in the direction of *γ* and not of *u*¹). In a narrow transcription the sound might be written *ay*.

¹) The diphthong is similar to that heard in the Devonshire dialect in *house*, *sound*, etc.

hàwd north
dáwli long rope attached to a bucket for water
hàwd thin stick

I am tempted to think that *aaw* and *aw* belong to the same phoneme. But if this is the case, the difference in the pronunciation of the diphthongs of *haaw* and *hàwd* is difficult to explain. More examples containing *aaw* and *aw* must be collected and studied.

æw. In a narrow transcription this sound might be written *æy*.
gàws molar tooth
ægàw take care of
mæwliid (also *mawliid*) prayer for the dead
kàw one (in counting)
awæw grandfather
fugàw Get far away!
hàdæw laggard (applied to camel)
gàwra slaughter
mádæw black
hálæw flame, blaze
waan gabæwbi I shall grow old
waan qabæwbi I shall get cold
bæwdo thigh
illæw forget
dæw near

In certain groups *ow* is used, that is, a diphthong starting in the position of *o* and moving towards *u*. (See page 155 (e)).

LENGTH.

It will have been noticed from the examples given that length of vowels and consonants is very important and in many cases significant.

Examples of Significant Vowel Length:

<i>fiin</i> small bird of evil omen.	<i>iid</i> sand
(Also heralds the coming of rain)	<i>id</i> human beings and animals
<i>fin</i> pimple	other than wild ones
<i>jiirr</i> rat	<i>saan</i> hide of cows, camels
<i>jirr</i> heavy rain	<i>san</i> leather
<i>jiid</i> lean (not fat)	<i>laab</i> chest (body)
<i>jid</i> body, flesh	<i>lab</i> male
<i>diil</i> jar made of fibre	<i>taag</i> strength
<i>dil</i> peel	<i>tag</i> go away
<i>diif</i> nagging (?)	<i>kuul</i> necklace
<i>di</i> seldom, rare, few	<i>kul</i> hot
<i>diig</i> blood	<i>suun</i> road
<i>dig</i> put on	<i>sun</i> poison
<i>iir</i> buttermilk	<i>náagta</i> the woman
<i>ir</i> food in the stomach	<i>náagtaa</i> that woman
	<i>áqalka</i> the house
	<i>áqalkaa</i> that house

In the above examples the tone is the same for each pair of words. In the following, tone differs as well as length:

<i>bàal</i> feather	<i>dỳy</i> dip fingers in buttrr or milk
<i>bal</i> but	and suck or lick them
	<i>dỳg</i> aiming (in shooting)
<i>bàad</i> search	
<i>bad</i> half	<i>hèæg</i> evil wish
	<i>hæg</i> hole
<i>gàal</i> unbeliever	
<i>gāl</i> enter	
<i>dỳyl</i> attack	
<i>dyl</i> nostril	

Examples of significant Consonant Length.

Examples have already been given of significant length in the case of final *n*, *l* and *r*.

Examples of significant consonant length medially:

<i>keli</i> single	<i>há gæædɔ</i> let him reach
<i>kelli</i> kidney	<i>há gææddɔ</i> let her reach
<i>'ilo</i> springs of water	<i>há bæædɔ</i> let him jump
<i>'illo</i> put your shoes on	<i>há bææddɔ</i> let her jump
<i>wáran</i> spear	<i>an gálo</i> let me go in
<i>warran</i> tell the news	<i>an gállo</i> (or <i>gálno</i>) let us go in
<i>salaan</i> Peace! (greeting)	<i>má haɖaan?</i> do (can) they remain?
<i>sallaan</i> ladder	<i>má haɖdaan?</i> do (can) you remain?
<i>gæædɛy¹</i> I reached	<i>má baaɖaan?</i> do (can) they
<i>gææddɛy¹</i> she reached	search?
	<i>má baaɖdaan?</i> do (can) you
<i>báaɖay</i> I searched	search?
<i>báaɖɖay</i> she searched	

This is a convenient place to draw attention to the frequency of double consonants, particularly, of voiced plosives, initially in words in connected speech. This doubling is not significant. It appears to take place after a stressed syllable ending in a short vowel and pronounced usually with the high level tone. It is commonly heard, for example, after the particles *ka*, *u*, *ku*, *ma*, *ha*. The doubling is recorded in the following examples, but need not be recorded either in a phonetic transcription or in ordinary orthography.

¹) See footnote 1, page 154.

Examples:

<i>kú ddeh</i> say to him (to her)	<i>'ú ddiib</i> give (pass) to him
<i>há ggalo</i> let him go in	<i>háawl baan 'ú ddimánayyaa</i> I am
<i>há ggaleen</i> let them go in	dying of hard work
<i>má ggafaan?</i> Do you (pl.) go in?	<i>digtaenádu ká wwanæwgsan</i>
<i>má ggafàan</i> you do not go in	<i>geesinimáda</i> cautiousness is
<i>má ggaran</i> I don't understand	better than bravery
<i>ká qqaad</i> take from	

It often happens in Somali that certain sounds are long when the words in which they occur are pronounced in isolation, but short in quick speech. In such cases it is perhaps advisable always to record those sounds with double letters¹).

TONES

The Tones of Isolated Words

There appear to be four main tones:

1. High level, often with a non-essential rise (ˊ).
2. Mid level. This often rises slightly, but the rise is not essential. The interval between the high level and the mid level is about one musical tone (-).
3. Low level, generally falling in quite final positions. This tone occurs in final syllables after the high level and the falling tones. The interval between the high and low level tones is about a fourth (ˋ).
4. Falling. This falls from high level to low level (ˋˊ).

¹) Compare the use of length marks in the broad transcription of English.

System of marking word-tone used in this article.

One Syllabled Words.

One syllabled words are pronounced either with the mid-level or with the falling tone.

- a) Mid-level. No mark is used to indicate this tone: *baq* (half), *sun* (poison), *laan* (branch), *'iir* (buttermilk), *liħ* (six), *sid* (carry), *hal* (she-camel). When the suffix denoting the definite article is added, the root syllable has the high level tone (marked with an acute accent over the first vowel letter of the syllable), the suffix the low level tone (unmarked), (ˊ ˋ): *báqka* (the half), *súnta* (the poison), *láanta* (the branch), *'iirta* (the buttermilk), *háffa*¹) (the she-camel).
- b) Falling. This is marked by a grave accent over the first vowel letter: *bàal* (feather), *làan* (small tree), *dàæg* (green

¹) One *f* was accepted.

grass), *yèel* (do). When the suffix denoting the definite article is added, the root syllable retains the falling tone, the suffix is pronounced with the low level tone which is unmarked, (ˋ ˋ): *bàalka* (the feather), *làanka* (the small tree), *dàægga* (the green grass).

Two Syllabled Words.

- a) Both mid-level¹). No mark: *sagaal* (nine), *'inan* (daughter), *xamiis* (Thursday), *nirik* (baby camel (f.)), *qorraħ* (sun), *dabayl* (wind). When the suffix for the definite article is added, the first syllable is pronounced with the mid-level (unmarked), the second with the high-level (acute accent), the suffix with the low level which is unmarked, (ˊ ˊ ˋ): *'inánta* (the daughter), *niríkta* (the baby camel (f.)), *qorráħda* (the sun), *dabáyfa* (the wind), *deeráda* (the gazelle).
- b) Both level, the first high, the second low (ˊ ˋ). An acute accent is placed over the vowel of the first syllable: *bóqor* (king), *'inan* (son), *nírik* (baby camel (m.)), *'áqal* (house). If the suffix for the definite article is added, the first syllable retains the high level, the second and third syllables are low (ˊ ˋ ˋ): *bóqorka*, *nírigga*, *'inanka*, *'áqalka*.
- c) First mid-level, second falling (ˊ ˋˊ). A grave accent is placed over the first vowel letter of the second syllable: *fabèel* (leopard), *fanqàal* (spoon), *siddèed* (eight), *so'dàal* or *sod'àal* (traveller). If the termination for the definite article is added it is pronounced with the low level or slightly falling tone, which is unmarked (ˊ ˋˊ ˋ): *fabèelka*, *fanqàalka*, *so'dàalka*.

Tone and Gender.

There is a connection in Somali between tone and gender.

Monosyllabic nouns which have long vowels or diphthongs and are pronounced with the falling tone are masculine:

With definite article

<i>miiq</i>	thread	<i>miiqqa</i>
<i>diig</i>	cock	<i>diigga</i>
<i>tiiħ</i>	shower	<i>tiiħa</i>
<i>gèes</i>	horn	<i>gèeska</i>
<i>sèeb</i>	oar	<i>sèebka</i>
<i>dææs</i>	shop	<i>dææska</i>
<i>jææh</i>	face	<i>jææha</i>
<i>làan</i>	small tree	<i>làanka</i>
<i>ròob</i>	rain	<i>ròobka</i>

¹) Isman Dubet often pronounced the second syllable on a slightly lower pitch than the first.

<i>dææg</i>	green grass	<i>dæægga</i>
<i>sùun</i>	leather strap	<i>sùunka</i>
<i>lìyɸ</i>	slice	<i>lìyɸka</i>
<i>nàyl</i>	lamb (m.)	<i>nàylka</i>

Monosyllabic nouns which have long vowels or diphthongs and are pronounced with the mid-level tone are feminine:

		With definite article
<i>'iir</i>	buttermilk	<i>'iirta</i>
<i>gees</i>	side, direction	<i>géesta</i>
<i>fæd</i>	rib	<i>fædɸa</i>
<i>mæel</i>	place	<i>mæefa</i>
<i>wææh</i>	quarter	<i>wææhda</i>
<i>laan</i>	branch	<i>láanta</i>
<i>laab</i>	chest	<i>láabta</i>
<i>qool</i>	lateral incisor tooth	<i>qóofa</i>
<i>'ææg</i>	beacon	<i>'æægta</i>
<i>kuul</i>	necklace	<i>kúufa</i>
<i>nayl</i>	lamb (f.)	<i>náyfa</i>

There are exceptions to this. For example, *ræer*, *ræerka* (village), *fuud*, *fuudka* (soup), are masculine.

Monosyllabic words which have short vowels are pronounced with the mid-level tone. There are no exceptions to this among the words I have collected. Of those words which are nouns some are masculine and some feminine. Thus tone is here no guide to gender.

Masculine:

<i>'æd</i>	piece	<i>'ædka</i>
<i>dab</i>	fire	<i>dábka</i>
<i>qann</i>	side, direction	<i>qánka</i>
<i>gall</i>	pool	<i>gálka</i>
<i>dad</i>	people	<i>dádka</i>
<i>baq</i>	half	<i>báqka</i>
<i>'af</i>	mouth, language	<i>'áfka</i>
<i>rag</i>	men, masculine sex	<i>rágga</i>
<i>'ol</i>	enemy	<i>'ólka</i>
<i>tæg</i>	valley	<i>tægga</i>
<i>qul</i>	earth	<i>qúlka</i>
<i>dyl</i>	nostril	<i>dýlka</i>
<i>go'</i>	loincloth	<i>gó'a</i>
<i>sa'</i>	cow	<i>sá'a</i>

Feminine:

<i>sab</i>	outcast	<i>sábta</i>
<i>bad</i>	sea	<i>bádda</i>
<i>laf</i>	bone	<i>láfta</i>
<i>raq</i>	corpse	<i>ráqda</i>

<i>lo'</i>	herd of cattle	<i>ló'da</i>
<i>gæb</i>	respectable person	<i>gæbta</i>
<i>sun</i>	poison	<i>súnta</i>
<i>dyg</i>	good marksmanship	<i>dýgta</i>

Two-syllabled nouns pronounced with mid-level tones are feminine:

<i>gabad</i>	daughter	<i>gabáqɸa</i>
<i>'addoon</i>	slave (f.)	<i>'addóonta</i>
<i>'inan</i>	daughter	<i>'inánta</i>
<i>'ilin</i>	dwarf (f.)	<i>'ilínta</i>
<i>fabæel</i>	leopard (f.)	<i>fabéefa</i>
<i>gorrah</i>	sun	<i>gorráhda</i>
<i>dabayl</i>	wind	<i>dabáyfa</i>
<i>qaqoon</i>	bark of tree	<i>qaqóonta</i>
<i>soddoh</i>	mother-in-law	<i>soddóhda</i>

Two-syllabled nouns pronounced with a high followed by a low level tone are mostly masculine. Some are feminine.

Masculine:

<i>'inan</i>	son	<i>'inanka</i>
<i>'ilin</i>	dwarf (m.)	<i>'ilínka</i>
<i>'aqal</i>	house	<i>'áqalka</i>
<i>qósol</i>	laughter	<i>qósolka</i>
<i>'ásar</i>	afternoon	<i>'ásarka</i>
<i>bélel</i>	flame	<i>bélelka</i>
<i>qagañ</i>	stone	<i>qágaha</i>

Feminine. These end in *o* (or, after a fronting vowel, *æ*) in the singular, which is plural in form. Their tones are (ˉˉ) like those of the masculine words given above. When the termination for the definite article is added the tones are (-ˉˉ) and not (ˉˉˉ) as for the masculine words given above:

<i>wáddo</i>	road, path	<i>waddáda</i>
<i>hæedqo</i>	Somali dish	<i>hæedqáda</i>
<i>déero</i>	gazelle	<i>dæeráda</i>
<i>hææyo</i>	mother	<i>hææyáda</i>
<i>héro</i>	enclosure	<i>hæráda</i>
<i>máro</i>	loincloth (ten yards)	<i>maráda</i>
<i>'áaro</i>	spider	<i>'aaráda</i>

Two syllabled nouns pronounced with a mid-level followed by a falling tone¹⁾ are masculine:

<i>habèen</i>	night	<i>habèenka</i>
<i>libææh</i>	lion	<i>libææhka</i>
<i>fabèel</i>	leopard	<i>fabèelka</i>
<i>'æsàan</i>	young goat (m.)	<i>'æsàanka</i>
<i>habàas</i>	dust	<i>habàaska</i>

¹⁾ I think that the vowel in the syllable with the falling tone is (or may be) always long.

faṇḍàal spoon
'addòon slave (m.)
so'dàal traveller
qab'aaal miser

faṇḍàalka
'addòonka
so'dàalka
qab'aaalka

It will be seen from the above examples under Tone and Gender that the masculine ending for the definite article begins with the sound *k* unless the root ends in:

- 1) *g*, when the termination begins with *g* : *hæggā* (the hole)
- 2) *q*, when the termination begins with *q* : *faqqā* (the consultation)
- 3) *'*, *h*, when the termination has no initial consonant : *gó'a* (the loincloth), *gúrra'a* (the wrong), *qágaḥa* (the stone), *jææha* (the face).

The feminine ending for the definite article begins with the sound *t* unless the root ends in

- 1) *d*, *q*, *'*, *h*, *h*, *o*, when the termination begins with *d* : *bádda* (the sea), *ráqda* (the corpse), *ló'da* (the herd of cattle), *qorráḥda* (the sun), *soddóhda* (the mother-in-law), *ḥeráda* (the enclosure)
- 2) *q*, when the termination begins with *q* : *gabáqda* (the daughter)
- 3) *l*, when *l* is replaced by *f* before the vowel termination : *méeḥfa* (the place).

Plurals of both masculine and feminine nouns are pronounced with the mid-level tone in all syllables:

<i>naɣlal</i> lambs (m.)	<i>kuulo</i> necklaces
<i>naɣlo</i> lambs (f.)	<i>seebab</i> oars
<i>sanān</i> noses	<i>libææḥiyo</i> lions
<i>niman</i> men	<i>faṇḍaalo</i> spoons
<i>naago</i> women	<i>'inamo</i> sons

Exceptions are the feminine words already referred to, ending in *o* in the singular. These have (- _) in the plural:

ḥeedáæyin (also *ḥeediyo*, with level tones)
deeráæyin
ḥææyáæyin
ḥeráæyin (also *ḥeriyo*, with level tones)

Significant Word-Tone.

The following are examples to illustrate the semantic value of tones in Somali:

<i>gees</i> side, direction	<i>maal</i> scrofula
<i>gèes</i> horn	<i>màal</i> milk
<i>hees</i> song	<i>qaan</i> debt
<i>hèes</i> sing	<i>qàan</i> foals of camels

laan branch
làan very small tree standing alone

dææg pain recurring after wound from blow
dææg green grass

qool lateral incisor tooth
qòol very big cloud

siin gift
siin mucus

'iir buttermilk
'iir fall down slowly (as if ill)

laab chest (body)
làab fold, bend

buur mountain
bùur make round (with hand), mound

kuul necklace
kùul favourable conversation about person

'aawr plural of *'àawr*
'àawr camel (m.)

qaaw noise of the blacksmith's hammer and other similar tapping sounds
qàaw big mountain

suun road
sùun leather strap

daal common ground in front of village
dàal or *ḍàal* lentil

jeeq rib
jèeq comb, blow with clenched fist

toon garlic
tòon fruit of *gæb* (special tree)

dææn the other side of the river
dææn jaw (one side)

yæel long strip of leather for strapping load on to camel
yèel do, obey

gææq he reached (short form)
gææq reach

rææg he was late (short form)
rææg be late, delay

tææg he raised (short form)
tææg raise, put upright

bææd he jumped (short form)
bææd jump

weyl heifer
wèyl calf

diin religion
dìin tortoise

ga'an arm, hand
gá'an elephant's trunk

berri tomorrow
bérri land

xamiis Thursday
xamìis very long shirt

da'al lobe of the ear
dá'al corner of something that can be held, e. g. loincloth, mat, sheet of paper

maqal lambs and kids
máqal listen

dabbaal swimming
dabbàal direct (of cattle)

sanan noses
sánan idol

'afártan forty
'áfartan this four (pointing)

bahal thing
báhal wild beast

'inan daughter
'inan son

'islaan old woman
'islàan old man

nirig baby camel (f.)
nírig baby camel (m.)

'addoon slave (f.)
'addòon slave (m.)

wahar baby goat (f.)
wáhar baby goat (m.)

'ilin dwarf (f.)
'ilín dwarf (m.)

'eesaan small goat (f.)
'eesàan small goat (m.)

qaalin young camel (f.)
qáalin young camel (m.)

baqal mule (f.)
báqal he-mule, radish

má fεεgàan
má fεεgaan?

They do not tell
Do they tell?

má galàan
má galaan?

They do not go in
Do they go in?

má tagàan
má tagaan?

They do not go
Do they go?

má 'εεgàan
má 'εεgaan?

They do not look
Do they look?

má baaqàan
má baaqaan?

They do not search
Do they search?

má raa'àan
má raa'aan?

They do not accompany
Do they accompany?

má haqàan
má haqaan?

They do not remain
Do they remain?

Verbal Forms

má fεεgtàan (- - \) you do } not tell (pl.)
can

má fεεgtaan? (- -) do } you tell? (pl.)
can

má gafàan you do } not go in
can

má gafaan? do } you go in?
can

má tagtàn you do } not go
can

má tagtaan? do } you go?
can

má 'εεgtàn You do not look
má 'εεgtaan? Do you look?

má baaqàan You do not search
má baaqaan? Do you search?

má raa'àan You do not accompany
má raa'daan? Do you accompany?

má haqàan You do not remain
má haqaan? Do you remain?

Phrases and Short Sentences

waa 'inán qèer (- - - \) the daughter is tall
waa 'inan qèer (- - - \) the son is tall

waa súun qèer (- - \) the road is long
waa sùn qèer (- \ \) the leather belt is long

lāan kelīya (- - -) one branch
lāan kelīya (\ - -) one small tree

lāan iyo laan (\ - -) small tree and branch
laan iyo lāan (/ - - \) branch and small tree

'inan iyo 'inan (- - - -) son and daughter
'inán iyo 'inan (- - - -) daughter and son

gèel iyo 'áqì (\ - - -) camels and sheep and goats
'áqì iyo gèel (- - - \) sheep and goats and camels

labá qàad (- - \) Carry two!
laba qàad (- - \) carrying two

siddèed qàad (- \ \) Carry eight!
siddeed qàad (- - \) carrying eight

<i>nàyl bàan helay</i>	(\ \ - -)	I found a lamb (m.)
<i>nayl bàan helay</i>	(- \ - -)	I found a lamb (f.)
<i>damèer bàan 'arkaa</i>	(- \ \ - -)	I see a donkey (m.)
<i>daméer bàan 'arkaa</i>	(- \ \ - -)	I see a donkey (f.)

Tones in Connected Speech

In tone languages syllables may not, and often do not, have in connected speech the tones which they bear in isolation. Tone changes are brought about mainly by the influence of neighbouring tones and by position in a sense-group. They are not made arbitrarily but are governed by rules which can be formulated after the careful study of many examples.

In Somali tone changes are common in connected speech; and there is evidence in many of these of method and consistency; others appear to follow no law, but may prove to do so on further investigation.

Certain words in Somali which are indistinguishable in their simple form except by tone are often not used in connected speech in their simple form, but have some inflexion which distinguishes them even if they are pronounced with the wrong tones. Thus a native, while realising that something was wrong, would understand a speaker who pronounced *gèeska* (the horn) with the same tones as *géesa* (the direction), since a distinguishing suffix makes the meaning clear. In the same way he would understand *'inanka* (the son) if pronounced with the same tones as *'inánta* (the daughter), *báhalka* (the wild beast) if pronounced with the same tone as *baháfa* (the thing), etc.

STRESS

Stress and pitch are closely connected.

In words of more than one syllable strong stress is given to the syllable pronounced with high level or falling pitch. (The tone-marks in the following examples thus mark strong stress as well as tone.)

Examples:

1. Strong stress and high level pitch on the first syllable:

(- -)	{	<i>'inan</i>	son
		<i>'ásar</i>	afternoon
		<i>gúrra'</i>	wrong
		<i>qósol</i>	laughter
		<i>bélel</i>	flame
		<i>dágah</i>	stone
(- - -)	{	<i>'inanka</i>	the son
		<i>'áqalka</i>	the house
		<i>gúrra'a</i>	the wrong
		<i>qósolka</i>	the laughter

2. Strong stress and falling pitch on the first syllable:

(\ -)	{	<i>kífka</i>	the bag
		<i>làanka</i>	the small tree
		<i>ràadka</i>	the footmark
		<i>gèeska</i>	the horn
		<i>dæægga</i>	the green grass

3. Strong stress and high level pitch on the second syllable:

(- - -)	{	<i>harrágo</i>	smartness
		<i>'inánta</i>	the daughter
		<i>qorráħda</i>	the sun
		<i>'ad'édde</i>	the sun
		<i>dawá'o</i>	the fox
		<i>dæeráda</i>	the gazelle

4. Strong stress and falling pitch on the second syllable:

(- \ -)	{	<i>dab'áal</i>	miser
		<i>sod'áal</i>	traveller
		<i>'addoon</i>	slave (m.)
		<i>fabèel</i>	leopard
		<i>fanqàal</i>	spoon
		<i>'itàal</i>	strength, might
(- \ -)	{	<i>dab'áalka</i>	the miser
		<i>sod'áalka</i>	the traveller
		<i>'addoonka</i>	the slave (m.)
		<i>fabèelka</i>	the leopard
		<i>fanqàalka</i>	the spoon
		<i>'itàalka</i>	the strength

There is fairly even distribution of speech energy over syllables pronounced with the same level pitch:

(- -)	{	<i>'inan</i>	daughter
		<i>'ulus</i>	heavy
		<i>éanan</i>	noses
		<i>naago</i>	women
		<i>sagaal</i>	nine
		<i>'ahad</i>	Sunday
(- - -)	{	<i>fanqaal</i>	spoons
		<i>salaasa</i>	Tuesday
		<i>'arba'a</i>	Wednesday

VOWEL HARMONY

It will have to be decided whether vowel harmony is to be indicated in Somali orthography or not. It may be considered advisable that an inflexional termination which has a fixed grammatical function

should have the same orthographical form though it may not have a fixed pronunciation. A Somali speaker would naturally pronounce such terminations correctly whether they were spelt with front or back vowel letters. For example, to him the plural endings are -o, -al, -ar, etc.; and it is perhaps unnecessary, in an orthography for his use, to spell them in more than one way. Similarly with the endings for the definite article, verbal inflexions, etc. Many words also have two phonetic forms. There may be no need for the native to show these in his orthography, since he uses the correct forms naturally in their different settings in connected speech. On the other hand the fact that there are exceptions may make it advisable to represent vowel-harmony forms in orthography.

Neither Isman Dubet nor Haji Farah was aware of his use of vowel harmony forms until his attention was drawn to it; but my disregard of the more obvious of these forms was at once noticed and condemned. The foreign learner of Somali should therefore try to understand the way in which vowel harmony works; and it would perhaps be helpful in the early stages of his difficulties if he could study phonetic transcriptions in which vowel harmony — at any rate that occurring within words — were shown.

Below are many examples of a simple nature in which vowel harmony is recorded. It will be seen that a suffix is pronounced with a retracting vowel when the root syllable contains the vowels *i* (short)¹, *ε* (long and short), *a* (long and short), *o* (long and short), *u* (long and short). These vowels may be called 'retracting' vowels. A suffix is pronounced with a front or central vowel when the root syllable contains the vowels *i*², *e* (long and short), *æ* (long and short), *œ* (long and short), *y* (long and short). These vowels may be called 'fronting' vowels.

EXAMPLES

a) Terminations for the plural.

1. Retracting vowel in root; termination pronounced with retracting vowel:

<i>i</i> : <i>tin</i>	hair	pl. <i>timo</i> , <i>tinan</i>
<i>fin</i>	pimple	pl. <i>finan</i>
<i>bil</i>	month	pl. <i>bilō</i>
<i>'id</i>	people	pl. <i>'ido</i>
<i>'il</i>	spring	pl. <i>'ilo</i>
<i>tib</i>	wooden pestle	pl. <i>tibo</i>
<i>'irr</i>	sky	pl. <i>'irar</i>
<i>firr</i>	meeting	pl. <i>firar</i>

¹) Short *i* in the root is generally followed by a retracting vowel in the termination; but there are a good many exceptions.

²) If the root containing this vowel is closed by a retracting consonant like *q*, *'*, the vowel of the suffix is affected. E. g. *m̐iqqa*, not *m̐iqqæ* (the thread), *ḡi'a*, not *ḡi'æ* (the three—long-lived Somali tree).

Exceptions:

<i>jid</i>	way, road	pl. <i>jided</i> } <i>jida</i> }
<i>dih</i>	dry bed of river	pl. <i>dihæ</i>
<i>nirig</i>	baby camel (f.)	pl. <i>nirgæ</i>
<i>εε</i> : <i>seeb</i>	oar	pl. <i>seebab</i>
<i>wēel</i>	vessel, pot	pl. <i>wēelal</i>
<i>yēel</i>	vessel for water	pl. <i>yēelal</i>
<i>'eel</i>	well	pl. <i>'eelal</i>
<i>reer</i>	village	pl. <i>reerar</i>
<i>ε</i> : <i>qeh</i>	centre	pl. <i>qeho</i> (cf. <i>degæ</i> ears)
<i>aa</i> : <i>gàal</i>	unbeliever	pl. <i>gaalal</i> , <i>gaalo</i>
<i>janqàal</i>	spoon	pl. <i>janqaalō</i>
<i>bàal</i>	feather	pl. <i>baalal</i>
<i>waab</i>	shed, hovel	pl. <i>waabo</i>
<i>laab</i>	chest (body)	pl. <i>laabo</i>
<i>lāan</i>	small tree	pl. <i>laaman</i>
<i>laan</i>	branch	pl. <i>laano</i> , <i>laamo</i>
<i>naag</i>	woman	pl. <i>naago</i>
<i>saan</i>	hide, skin	pl. <i>saano</i> , <i>saamo</i>
<i>a</i> : <i>sab</i>	outcast	pl. <i>sabo</i>
<i>san</i>	leather	pl. <i>sano</i>
<i>bad</i>	sea	pl. <i>bado</i>
<i>laf</i>	bone	pl. <i>lafo</i>
<i>oo</i> : <i>dòob</i>	youth	pl. <i>doobab</i>
<i>soor</i>	food	pl. <i>sooro</i>
<i>koor</i>	bell on camel	pl. <i>kooro</i>
<i>qool</i>	lateral incisor tooth	pl. <i>qoolo</i>
<i>qòol</i>	big cloud	pl. <i>qoolal</i>
<i>dabòol</i>	cover	pl. <i>daboolo</i>
<i>o</i> : <i>'od</i>	voice	pl. <i>'odad</i>
<i>lo'</i>	herd of cows	pl. <i>lo'o</i>
<i>uu</i> : <i>sùun</i>	leather belt	pl. <i>suuman</i>
<i>kuul</i>	necklace	pl. <i>kuulo</i>
<i>ḡiub</i>	film, membrane	pl. <i>ḡiubab</i>
<i>sùul</i>	thumb	pl. <i>suulal</i>
<i>u</i> : <i>dun</i>	thread	pl. <i>duno</i>
<i>kur</i>	hill	pl. <i>kuro</i>

<i>lug</i>	leg, hind leg	pl. <i>lugo</i>
<i>dul</i>	top	pl. <i>dulal</i> (cf. <i>dyləl</i> nostrils)

2. Fronting vowel in root; termination pronounced with front or central vowel:

<i>ii:</i> <i>dùg</i>	cock	pl. <i>diigeg</i>
<i>wiil</i>	boy	pl. <i>wiiləl</i>
<i>jiirr</i>	rat	pl. <i>jiirer, jiiryæ</i>
<i>dùin</i>	tortoise	pl. <i>diinen</i>

Exception:

<i>mùiq</i>	thread	pl. <i>miigaq</i>
<i>ee:</i> <i>habèen</i>	night	pl. <i>habeenæ, habeenyæ</i>
<i>gèel</i>	group of camels	pl. <i>geeləl</i>
<i>gèed</i>	single tree	pl. <i>geedəd</i>
<i>gees</i>	side	pl. <i>geesæ</i>

<i>e:</i> <i>deg</i>	ear	pl. <i>degæ</i>
<i>leg</i>	under part of sheep	pl. <i>legæg</i>
<i>ææ:</i> <i>rææd</i>	footmark	pl. <i>ræædəd, ræædyæ</i>
<i>dææs</i>	shop	pl. <i>dææses, dææsyæ</i>
<i>fææs</i>	axe	pl. <i>fææses, fææsyæ</i>
<i>wææh</i>	quarter	pl. <i>wææhæ, wææhyæ</i>

<i>æ:</i> <i>'æd</i>	piece of meat	pl. <i>'ædæ</i>
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<i>ææ:</i> <i>'ææg</i>	beacon	pl. <i>'æægæ</i>
<i>fææd</i>	top part of forehead	pl. <i>fæædæ</i>
<i>dææg</i>	pain	pl. <i>dæægæ</i>

<i>æ:</i> <i>gæb</i>	respectable person	pl. <i>gæbæ, gæbyæ</i>
<i>hæg</i>	hole	pl. <i>hægæ, hægyææl</i>
<i>tæg</i>	valley	pl. <i>tægæ, tægyææl</i>

<i>yy:</i> <i>lùyl</i>	pearl	pl. <i>lùyləl</i>
<i>rùyg</i>	knee-cap	pl. <i>rùygæg</i>
<i>lùyf</i>	slice	pl. <i>lùyfe, lùyfye</i>
<i>gùyd</i>	horse's mane	pl. <i>gùydəd</i>

<i>y:</i> <i>dyl</i>	nostril	pl. <i>dyləl</i>
<i>gyn</i>	part of tree just above ground	pl. <i>gynæ</i>

Should these terminations be spelt *-ag*, *-al*, *-ar*, *-an*, *-o*, *-ad*, the nature of the root vowel being a sufficient indication that the inflexion be pronounced with a front or central vowel? This question must be left unanswered until further materials are available.

b) Terminations denoting the definite article and the demonstrative adjective. (In each case the demonstrative is shown by lengthening the final vowel):

1. Retracting vowel in root; retracting vowel in termination:

<i>rèerka</i> the village	<i>bádda</i> the sea
<i>rèerkaa</i> that village	<i>dádka</i> the people
<i>fírka</i> the meeting	<i>dabòolka</i> the cover
<i>fírkaa</i> that meeting	<i>'addòonka</i> the slave (m.)
<i>féedqa</i> the rib	<i>hórta</i> the beginning
<i>náagta</i> the woman	<i>júudka</i> the soup
<i>làanka</i> the small tree	<i>búnka</i> the coffee
<i>'áqalka</i> the house	

2. Fronting vowel in root; fronting vowel in termination:

<i>kùiskæ</i> the bag	<i>dáægtæ</i> the pain
<i>kùiskææ</i> that bag	<i>hággæ</i> the hole
<i>gèedkæ</i> the small tree	<i>gæbtæ</i> the respectable person
<i>gèedkææ</i> that small tree	<i>gùyrkæ</i> the marriage
<i>gèeskæ</i> the horn	<i>tùygga</i> the robber
<i>dégtæ</i> the ear	<i>'ædkæ</i> the piece of meat
<i>ræædkæ</i> the footmark	<i>dæ'dæ</i> the age
<i>'æægtæ</i> the beacon	

Exceptions¹⁾:

<i>mùiqqa</i> the thread
<i>jù'a</i> the tree (long-lived Somali tree)
<i>tùha</i> the shower

c) Verbal Inflexions.

1st Person Singular, Imperative.

1. Retracting vowel in root; retracting vowel in inflexion:

<i>an</i> ²⁾ <i>díro</i> let me send	<i>an</i> <i>qódo</i> let me dig
<i>an</i> <i>dígo</i> let me put on	<i>an</i> <i>báado</i> let me search
<i>an</i> <i>dílo</i> let me peel	<i>an</i> <i>gálo</i> let me go in
<i>an</i> <i>díso</i> let me build	<i>an</i> <i>túso</i> let me show
<i>an</i> <i>hído</i> let me fasten	<i>an</i> <i>súgo</i> let me clear
<i>an</i> <i>hílo</i> let me cover jar (for milk or water)	<i>an</i> <i>ráa'o</i> let me accompany
<i>an</i> <i>hélo</i> let me find	<i>an</i> <i>fégo</i> let me tell
<i>an</i> <i>'éego</i> let me look	<i>an</i> <i>tólo</i> let me sew
<i>an</i> <i>tágo</i> let me go	<i>an</i> <i>báago</i> let me call, signal
	<i>an</i> <i>'úno</i> let me eat

¹⁾ See footnote 2, page 149.

²⁾ Notice *an* under 1, *æn* under 2. The intonation of these imperatives is (- - -).

Exceptions:

æn sídæ let me carry
æn rídæ let me throw
æn dílæ let me kill

2. Fronting vowel in root; fronting vowel in inflexion:

<i>æn díidæ</i> let me refuse	<i>æn gæædæ</i> let me reach
<i>æn dégæ</i> let me alight	<i>æn jæægæ</i> let me remain
<i>æn báædæ</i> let me jump	<i>æn dýsæ</i> let me stoop
<i>æn sýgæ</i> let me wait	<i>æn rægæ</i> let me turn over
<i>æn tæægæ</i> let me raise	<i>æn týlæ</i> let me heap up
<i>æn 'æbbæ</i> let me drink	

2nd Person Plural, Past Tense.

1. Retracting vowel in root; retracting vowel in inflexion¹⁾:

<i>wéyðin dírtæn</i> you sent	<i>wéyðin baadðæn</i> you searched
<i>wéyðin dígtæn</i> you put on	<i>wéyðin gæfæn</i> you went in
<i>wéyðin dífæn</i> you peeled	<i>wéyðin tustæn</i> you showed
<i>wéyðin dístæn</i> you built	<i>wéyðin sugtæn</i> you cleared
<i>wéyðin híððæn</i> you fastened	<i>wéyðin raa'dæn</i> you accompanied
<i>wéyðin hífæn</i> you covered jar	<i>wéyðin fægtæn</i> you told
<i>wéyðin hæfæn</i> you found	<i>wéyðin tofæn</i> you sewed
<i>wéyðin ægtæn</i> you looked	<i>wéyðin baadðæn</i> you called, sig- nalled
<i>wéyðin tagtæn</i> you went	<i>wéyðin 'untæn</i> you ate
<i>wéyðin godðæn</i> you dug	<i>wéyðin suuhðæn</i> you fainted

Exceptions:

wéyðin síddeæn you carried
wéyðin ríddeæn you threw
wéyðin dífæn you killed

2. Fronting vowel in root; fronting vowel in inflexion:

<i>wéyðin díiddeæn</i> you refused	<i>wéyðin gææðdeæn</i> you reached
<i>wéyðin degteæn</i> you alighted	<i>wéyðin jæægteæn</i> you remained
<i>wéyðin bææddeæn</i> you jumped	<i>wéyðin rægteæn</i> you turned over
<i>wéyðin sýgteæn</i> you waited	<i>wéyðin dýsteæn</i> you stooped
<i>wéyðin tæægteæn</i> you raised	<i>wéyðin týfææn</i> you heaped up
<i>wéyðin 'æbteæn</i> you drank	

1st Person Singular, Past Tense.

1. Retracting vowel in root; retracting vowel in inflexion²⁾:

<i>wàan díray</i> I sent	<i>wàan qóday</i> I dug
<i>wàan dígay</i> I put on	<i>wàan báaday</i> I searched
<i>wàan dílay</i> I peeled	<i>wàan gálay</i> I went in
<i>wàan dísay</i> I built	<i>wàan túsay</i> I showed

¹⁾ Intonation: (- - -).

²⁾ Intonation (\ - -).

wàan híday I fastened
wàan hílay I covered jar (for
milk or water)
wàan héláy I found
wàan 'éegay I looked

wàan sýgay I cleared
wàan ráa'ay I accompanied
wàan féegay I told
wàan báagay I called
wàan háday I remained

Exceptions:

wææn sídey I carried
wææn rídey I threw
wææn díley I killed

2. Fronting vowel in root; fronting vowel in inflexion¹⁾.

<i>wææn díidey</i> I refused	<i>wææn gæædey</i> I reached
<i>wææn báædey</i> I jumped	<i>wææn díibey</i> I handed over
<i>wææn sýgey</i> I waited	<i>wææn jíidey</i> I dragged along
<i>wææn tæægey</i> I raised	Etc.

Reflexive forms.

Compare the final sound in:

<i>baado</i> look for yourself	<i>díso</i> build for yourself
<i>'ægo</i> look for yourself	<i>fæðo</i> comb yourself

with that in

'iibsæ buy for yourself
dybæ roast for yourself
gyrsæ get married

d) Examples showing that some words are pronounced differently in different groups. In these examples the root vowel of the verb seems to be the determining factor. In isolation the first word of each group under 1. is pronounced *waan*, the last *doonaa*. The first word of each group under 2. is *wææn*, the last *dæænææ*²⁾.

1. Retracting vowel in root:

waan díri doonaa I shall send
waan dígi doonaa I shall put on
waan díli doonaa I shall peel
waan dísi doonaa I shall build
waan hídi doonaa I shall fasten
waan híli doonaa I shall cover jar
(for water or milk)
waan dí'i doonaa I shall fall down
waan tíri doonaa I shall wipe
waan táhi doonaa I shall thread
waan báadi doonaa I shall search

¹⁾ The difference shown under 1 and 2 in the pronunciation of this termination is quite marked and is indicated throughout in this article. But it may prove adequate in orthography always to write *ay*.

²⁾ Intonation: (- - -).

waan gúuri doonaa I shall travel by night
waan 'úni doonaa I shall eat
waan gúri doonaa I shall pick up
waan kúfi doonaa I shall fall (while walking or running)
waan rúhi doonaa I shall shake
waan súgi doonaa I shall clear

2. Fronting vowel in root:

wææn diidi dæænææ I shall refuse
wææn héli dæænææ I shall find
wææn dégi dæænææ I shall get down
wææn tégi dæænææ I shall go
wææn ségi dæænææ I shall miss
wææn léfi dæænææ I shall lick
wææn wéæyi dæænææ I shall not find
wææn 'ébbi dæænææ I shall drink
wææn réægi dæænææ I shall be late
wææn gææqi dæænææ I shall reach
wææn táægi dæænææ I shall raise
wææn róæri dæænææ I shall run
wææn tóli dæænææ I shall sew
wææn mógi dæænææ I shall agree
wææn gýyri dæænææ I shall shift
wææn týyli dæænææ I shall heap up
wææn díysi dæænææ I shall stoop
wææn súgi dæænææ I shall wait

e) Other examples of words which have more than one pronunciation.

sæw. The particle *sæw* (expressing doubt) is pronounced *sæw* in isolation and also in groups where the root of the verb contains a fronting vowel. It is pronounced *sow* in groups where the root of the verb contains a retracting vowel¹).

1. *sæw díidee* I may perhaps refuse
sæw bóædee I may perhaps jump
sæw súgee I may perhaps wait
sæw táægee I may perhaps raise

etc.

2. *sòw dílee* I may perhaps peel
sòw tíree I may perhaps wipe
sòw dísee I may perhaps build
sòw hílee I may perhaps cover jar
sòw 'égee I may perhaps look

sòw tágee I may perhaps go
sòw qódee I may perhaps dig
sòw báadee I may perhaps search
sòw súgee I may perhaps clear

Exceptions:

sèw dílee I may perhaps kill
sèw sídee I may perhaps carry
sèw rídee I may perhaps throw

la. The particle *la* denoting passive voice, is pronounced *la* in isolation and also before verbs containing retracting vowels. Before verbs with fronting vowels (and *y*) it is *ε*-like:

1. *wáha la 'arkay* the thing was seen.
wáha la maqlay the thing was heard.
béerta la gú haggajo the field (with him) is ploughed.
 (It is also possible to say *lu gu* in this case).
'áawska la gúu kéeno the grass is brought to you.
 (*lu gúu* is also possible).

2. *wáha le yidi* it was said.....

le yeed someone called.

Berberá le yimid someone came to Berbera.

Examples showing the fronting and closing influence of *y*. Compare the following:

há timaado let her come.

há yimaado (really *há yimæædæ*) let him come.

wéyidin timaaddeen you (pl.) came.

wéy yimaaddeen (really *yimæædeen*) they came.

kólkaasúu waráaba 'arkay..... then the hyena saw.....

kólkaasúu yidi..... (really *kólkaasýy*) then he said.....

'uu kú 'arkay..... he saw there.....

'uu kú yidi..... (really *ký*) he said to him.....

óo dan and all.....

óo yidi (really *éæ*) and he said.....

Berberá la yimid (really *le*) someone came to Berbera.

nín Berberá yimid (really *Berberé*) a man came to Berbera.

márkaasàa nínkii lahaa ka'ay then the owner got up.

márkaasàa nínkii lahaa yidi (really *lahææ*) then the owner said.....

'inántu waa qèertahay the daughter is tall.

'inanku waa qèeryahay (really *qèeryæhæy*) the son is tall.

(The sounds represented here by *æ* are also different, that preceding *y* being closer than that preceding *t*).

¹) Intonation (\ -).

Many examples of the fronting and closing influence of *y* are to be found in verbal endings. For example, the endings *ey* and *o* when preceded by *y*, especially when the root has a fronting vowel, are very close, and in the case of *o* fronted.

Examples:

waan 'éegayyey I was looking *'inaan 'éegayyo* that I may see
waan sýgayyey I was waiting *'inaan sýgayyo* that I may wait
 (The final vowel is almost *y*.)

The sound *w* also has a closing influence on neighbouring vowels.

CONNECTED TEXTS.

In the following connected texts an attempt has been made to record the most important cases of vowel harmony which occur. Where these are shown, the forms which would be adequate for a native or for a reader familiar with the working of vowel harmony are given in footnotes.

Only the most noticeable initial glottal plosives are recorded.

The pitch notation (which is only tentative) gives some idea of the intonation used by the speaker.

The translations were difficult to prepare as the speaker knew little English.

1.

Qiiq *aan* *bēlēl* *lahayn.*
 Smoke (Neg. particle) flame without.

Wæx bæx¹⁾ *nin* *badæw'ihi* *Berberæ²⁾* *yimid.* *Markaasuu*
 Once man simple to Berbera came. Then (he)

maqhaayad *galay;* *uu* *ku* *'arkay* *nin* *qahwæ* *kulul*
 coffee-shop he went in; he there saw man coffee hot

afuu/faayaa³⁾ *Goortaasuu* *læ⁴⁾* *yaabay* *ææ⁵⁾* *yidi:* *"(Egææbey,*
 blowing on. Then (he) was amazed and said: "Well,

¹⁾ *baa*.

²⁾ *Berbera*.

³⁾ Final vowel not very long.

⁴⁾ *la*.

⁵⁾ *oo*.

qiiq *waa* *ku* *'arkaayæ,* *ma* *(b)bēlēl¹⁾* *buu* *ka*
 smoke I there see, (Interrog. part.) flame he from it

(d)dææni?²⁾
 want?"

2.

Libæh³⁾ *bæx⁴⁾* *hal* *diley⁵⁾* *Kolkaasuu* *habardugaag* *oo* *dan*
 A lion she-camel killed. Then (he) wild animals all

issugu⁶⁾ *yædæy.* *Kolkaasuy⁷⁾* *yidi* *"Haffaa⁸⁾* *inoo* *gaybfa."*
 together he called. Then (he) he said "That camel for us divide."

Markaasey *dawa'o⁹⁾* *tiqi* *"Anigaa* *haffa¹⁰⁾* *qaybinayyaa¹¹⁾*
 Then (she) fox she said "I the camel will divide".

Kolkaasuu *fabeel¹²⁾* *yidi* *"Yæel."* *Kolkaasey* *tiqi* *"Haffa¹⁰⁾*
 Then leopard said "Do it". Then she (fox) said "The camel

ma *baq* *misæ* *baq?* *Baq* *waħalæ* *libæh.* *Baqka*
 (Interrog. part.) half or half? Half belongs to lion. The half

kalæna *ma* *wæxh* *misæ* *wæxh?* *Wæxh* *waħalæ*
 other (Interrog. part.) quarter or quarter? Quarter belongs to

¹⁾ Double *b* not significant.

²⁾ Double *d* not significant.

³⁾ This should perhaps be written *libæxh* throughout, though the *æ* is not long, except in *libæxhu*.

⁴⁾ *baa*. The tone falls in slow speech.

⁵⁾ Should this be written *dilay*? (See footnote 1, p. 154).

⁶⁾ Probably not necessary to write double *s*.

⁷⁾ *kolkaasuu*.

⁸⁾ Double *f* not essential. Single *f* was accepted.

⁹⁾ *da'awo* in the speech of Hargeisa.

¹⁰⁾ Double *f* not essential.

¹¹⁾ Final vowel not very long.

¹²⁾ *fabeel*.

libæh. Wææhdæ¹⁾ haqday laba mæelood ka (d)qiga²⁾.
lion. The quarter remaining two parts from it make.

Mæel wæhale libæh. Mæfa kalena habardugaagow³⁾
Half belongs to lion The half other you animals

qaybso." Kolkaasu waraabe yidi "Maḥay
share amongst yourselves." Then the hyena said "Why

'aynkaa ku noqotay?" Kolkaasey tiqi "Wahay
such things happen(ed)? Then she (fox) said "This is why

'aynkaa ku noqotay. Libæxhu waa boqor keeni, oo
such things happen(ed). The lion is king our, and

waana nin raga; issagaana⁴⁾ haffa⁵⁾ (d)diley⁶⁾.
he is man brave; he is the one who the camel killed."

3.

Dibi iyo⁷⁾ damæer feekæ⁸⁾ dææd.
Ox and donkey story their.

Nin baa beri lahaa dibi. Maalin walba beerta lagu⁹⁾
Man once owned ox. Day every the field with him

hagaafo. Iyo⁷⁾ damæer guriga had iyo⁷⁾ jeer
is ploughed. And donkey the village time (always) and time

¹⁾ wææhda.

²⁾ Double *d* not significant.

³⁾ Not æw here; but æw would perhaps be an adequate way of writing this suffix. (See 155). ⁴⁾ Single *s* was accepted. ⁵⁾ Double *f* not essential.

⁶⁾ Double *d* not significant. Should the word be written *dilay*? (See footnote 1, page 154.)

⁷⁾ Final vowel weak and indefinite.

⁸⁾ *feeka*.

⁹⁾ Also *lugu*.

iss¹⁾ ka jæægææ²⁾. Maalin dambæeto, ayyuu dibigii
(Reflexive) in remains. Day the other, he the ox

damæerkii 'u yimid. (Eæ³⁾ yidi "Waaryaaḥæe damæer,
the donkey to him came. And he said "Hullo Mr. Donkey,

adiguna barwaaqo ayyaad ku jirtaa⁴⁾, aniguna haawl
you plenty you in remain (are), and I hard work

baan 'u (d)qimanayyaa⁵⁾. Eæ mahaan sameyyææ⁶⁾? Dameerkii
I of am dying. And what am I to do? The donkey

bææ⁷⁾ yidi: "Berritu marka 'aawska lugu⁸⁾ keeno,
said: "Tomorrow when the grass to you is brought,

diid, oo 'iss⁹⁾ bukaysii." Markaasna ninkii lahaa
refuse (it), and pretend you're sick." At that time the owner

ayyaa maqlayyaa issaguna¹⁰⁾ 'a/ka hoolaha ayyuu
he is listening and he himself the language of cattle he

yaqaan. Subaḥdii dambæe ayyuu dibigii 'iss⁹⁾ ka yeelay sidii
knows. Morning next he the ox acted like

wah buka, ææ¹¹⁾ diidey¹²⁾ 'aawskii. Markaasaa ninkii
thing sick, and refused the grass. Then the

¹⁾ Double *s* not essential.

²⁾ jæægææ. Final vowel not very long.

³⁾ oo.

⁴⁾ Final vowel not very long.

⁵⁾ Final vowel not very long. Double *d* not essential.

⁶⁾ sameyyææ. Final vowel not very long.

⁷⁾ baa.

⁸⁾ Also *lugu*.

⁹⁾ Double *s* not essential.

¹⁰⁾ Double *s* not essential.

¹¹⁾ oo.

¹²⁾ Should this be written *diiday*? (See footnote 1, page 154.)

lahæ¹⁾ yidi: "Dameerka maanta beerta ku haggaa/a."
owner said: "The donkey today the field with him plough."

Dameerkii baa galabtii 'u yimid dibigii. Markaasuu²⁾
The donkey in the evening to him came (to) the ox. Then

yidi dibigi: "Waar! maħaad fεegtay?" Dameerkii bææ³⁾
he said the ox: "Hullo! How are you?" The donkey

yidi: "Nabad baan fεegay. Wahaan se maqlay arrin 'iga
said: "Well I feel. I but (I) heard subject me

niħisay." Dibigii bææ⁴⁾ yidi: "Waa maħay?" "Waha(a)n
frightened." The ox said: "What is it?" "I

maqlay ninkii 'ina lahaa 'oo leh 'haddii 'aanuu dibigu bæksen
heard our owner say 'if he not the ox cured

berritu, aynu qalno intaynu xasiri lahayn diggiisæ⁵⁾.
tomorrow, let us kill him before we lose his value.'

Immikana waha(a)n ku lεeyæhæy⁶⁾ orod oo 'aawskaagii daaq."
And now I to you (I) say Run and your grass eat."

Markaasaa dibigii degdeg 'uu ka'ay oo 'aawskiisii daaqay.
Then the ox at once he got up and his grass ate.

Halkaasaa dameerkii 'uu kaga baħsaday haawfii.
In that way the donkey he escaped the hard work.

LILIAS E. ARMSTRONG.

¹⁾ lahaa. ²⁾ Markaasuu ³⁾ baa. ⁴⁾ baa. ⁵⁾ diggiisa. ⁶⁾ lεeyahay.