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INTERNALLY-HEADED RELATIVE CLAUSES IN LITERARY SOMALI?

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1. Background

It is with great pleasure that the present author has written this short paper for Annarita Puglielli. Thanks to her, he was involved in the team that was preparing the Somali-Italian Dictionary (Agostini *et al.* 1985) when he had just got his university degree, more than thirty years ago. This was the beginning of a long-standing interest in Somali and its linguistic and historical context in the Horn of Africa for him, and of an equally long-standing friendship and fruitful cooperation between him and her.

Literary Somali (LS) refers here to the Somali language as it is has been written by educated Somali's for at least six decades, even though some people had been already writing it since the last decades of the 19th century using both Latin, Arabic and locally developed scripts. For a very short history of this the interested reader may refer to Banti (2010: 694b f.) and the literature that is cited there. One should note that the Somali's don't only have a written literature, but also a much richer oral literature that already existed many centuries before the development of Somali literacy, and that is still quite alive both in the Somali heartlands and in the diaspora. It includes both elevated and folk poetry, different genres of narratives and of wisdom literature, as well as historical and legal texts (see, e.g., Andrzejewski 1985), and circulates in different partly koineized dialects. Written LS, however, in the official Latin orthography that was introduced for it in 1972, is now a largely homogeneous language mainly based upon Northern Somali. It is not fully standardized *stricto sensu*, because it displays a considerable degree of orthographical variation – even in its two major monolingual dictionaries (Yaasiin 1976 and Saalax 2004) – as well as some phonological, grammatical and lexical differences between writers with different regional backgrounds. Beside written LS, the corresponding spoken Somali koine displays a higher level of regional variation or "accents", even though it is also perceived as being a single language by its speakers. Quite detailed studies on the different registers of both written LS and spoken Somali, and of their main peculiarities have been published by Biber and Mohamed Hared (1992) and Biber (1995), yet without discussing regional variation in depth.

The corpus from which the data of this study are drawn has been chosen in order to represent different varieties of written LS:

(i.) Muuse Galaal (1956), written by one of the major Somali intellectuals during the central decades of the 20th century, born in the Burco district of Somaliland and well versed in oral poetry. His *Hikmad Soomaali*, a collection of traditional narratives that also includes some poems, was published with Andrzejewski's detailed notes ca. 15 years before the official introduction of the present Somali orthography, and still displays several phonological features that were later reduced in written Somali, such as the extensive coalescence of enclitic particles and grammatical elements with the final rhymes of their host words, e.g., *kaloo* for *kale oo* 'other and', or *dameerii* for *dameeri-hii* 'donkeys-M:ANAPHORIC.ART'. The examples drawn from his book have been adapted here to the present Somali orthography, e.g., by replacing *ħ* with *x* (a voiceless pharyngeal fricative), *'* with *c* (a voiced pharyngeal fricative that is frequently realised as an epiglottal), etc. His language represents LS as it was written in those years by a native speaker of north-western (or strict) Northern Somali. For instance, it systematically has a voiced retroflex flap, i.e., *dh* after vowels as in *yidhi* 'he said' instead of *yiri*, *aan-ay* as a clitic chain composed of 'not-she' (or 'not-they') instead of *ays-an* or *ay-nan* 'she-not', etc.

(ii.) Idaajaa (1994), by one of the major living Somali intellectuals; a poet himself and author of many books and essays on Somali literature and politics. This paper deals with the organisation known at that time as *Al-Itixaad Al-Islaami*, and the looming issue of armed religious fundamentalism among the Somali's. His language represents LS political prose as it is written by a

native speaker of Northern Somali from the Gaalkacyo area in Mudug, near to the linguistic border between Northern and Benaadir Somali dialects. For instance, it systematically has *r* for *dh* after vowels, as in *yiri* 'he said', and *hartay* 'she/it remained' instead of more northern *hadhay* [haḍːay], it alternates the types *ays-an* and *aan-ay* in clitic chains, etc. It also displays some kinds of nominative case marking that don't occur in other varieties of LS, as *bixiyeeni* 'that they gave' instead of *bixiyeen*, as nominative of the dependent 3PL. *bixiyeen* [bihiyêːn] in example (1a).

(iii.) Kaddare (1983), one of the first Somali novels, written by one of the major intellectuals from the area that includes Middle Shabeelle, southern Galguduud and southern Mudug. A poet himself, and an expert of traditional poetry and other oral genres, his novel incorporates several examples of poetic and wisdom literary genres from all the Northern and Benaadir Somali speaking regions, and represents LS as it is written by a native speaker of a central Benaadir Somali variety. For instance, it has systematically *yiri* and *hartay* like Idaajaa's paper, but it generally only has the *ays-an* type of clitic chain (the other type, e.g., *aan-u* 'not-he', only occurs in quotes from northern poetry), etc. In addition to this, it has some types of nominative case marking that rarely occur in Northern Somali writers, such as *wadaahu* 'who drives' instead of *wadaa*, as nominative of the subjectal relative 3SG.M *wada* [wadá] in example (1b). Other example are *caleemu* 'leaves' instead of *caleemi* as nominative of *caleen* [ʕaléːn], and *saaranu* 'who are on' instead of *saarani* or low-toned *saaran*, as nominative of the subjectal relative 3PL. *saaran* [saːrán] in examples (1c) and, respectively, (1d).

(1)

a. (Idaajaa 1994: 9)

Jawaabtii	*ay*	*bixiyeeni*	*waxay*	*noqotay* ...
answer:F:the	they	gave:3PL:NOM	waxa:it	became:3SG.F

'The answer they gave was ...'

b. (Kaddare 1983: 32)

Shufeerka	*baabuurka*	*wadaahu*	*waa*	*nin*
chauffeur:M:the	bus:M:the	drives:3SG.M:NOM	waa	man
waayeel	*ah*			
elder	is:3SG.M			

'The chauffeur who drives the bus is an elderly man.'

c. (Kaddare 1983: 34)

Laamo	*cargeeyay*	*oo*	*caleemu*	*ku*	*gaafan*	*tahay*...
branches	greened:3PL	and	leaves:NOM	on	covering	is3SG.F

'Branches full of sap and covered with leaves ...'
(lit. 'that leaves cover them').

d. (Kaddare 1983: 32)

Dadka	*kale*	*oo*	*baabuurka*	*saaranu*	*waxay*
people:M:the	other	and	bus:M:the	are_on:3PL:NOM	waxa:they
u badan yihiin	*rag*	*da'*	*dhexaad*	*ah*	
to many are:3PL	men	age	middle	are:3PL	

'The other people who are on the bus are mostly middle-aged men.'

2. Northern Somali relative clauses

Northern Somali relative clauses have been described in the literature as "post-nominal external relatives with the relativised position in the clause marked by a gap" (Saeed 1999: 210; see also Andrzejewski 1964, 1968 and 1979; Antinucci 1981: 228 ff.; Abdalla & Puglielli 1999: 211 ff.). Indeed, it is true that they usually follow their head nouns, without any complementizers or relative pronouns nor any overt anaphoric pronouns that refer to their heads. The head noun is thus matched by a Ø-element in the relative clause, or by the agreement morphemes of its verb, when the relativized item is the subject. A good example is (1c) above, where the two relative clauses *cargeeyay* 'that are full of sap' and *caleemu ku gaafan tahay* 'that leaves cover them' are coordinated by means of the conjunction *oo* and follow their head noun *laamo* 'branches'.

A few features of Northern Somali relative clauses are typologically interesting. First of all, they tend to display OV word order more rigidly than main clauses, where different phenomena, partly related to information structure, often cause one or more constituents to occur after the verb.

Secondly, many affirmative and negative verbal forms are different from the corresponding verbal forms that occur in main clauses. For instance, the affirmative non-past in relative clauses whose subject is different from the relativized element has final high-toned *-o* in the SG and 1PL, whereas it has low-toned *-aa* in main clauses whose subject is not focussed; affirmative past verbs have high-toned final syllables in relative clauses but low-toned ones in main clauses; negative non-past

verbs are identical to negative past verbs in relative clauses, whereas they differ from them in main clauses, etc.

Thirdly, relative clauses are clearly distinguished from main clauses not only by their different verbal forms, but also by their using *aan* as negative particle rather than high-toned *ma*.

Fourth, focus marking by means of the well-known focus particles *baa*, *ayaa* and *waa* or of the so-called *waxa*-clefting only occurs in main clauses, never in relative clauses.

Fifth, there is a clear-cut distinction between subjectal relative clauses, i.e., clauses with a relativised subject like *cargeeyay* 'that are full of sap' in (1c), and non-subjectal relative clauses like *caleemu ku gaafan tahay* 'that leaves cover them' in the same example, where the subject of the relative is *caleemu* 'leaves' rather than its head noun *laamo* 'branches'. The difference is given by (i.) the use of different affirmative verbal forms and (ii.) the lack of subject clitics (*aan* 1SG, *aad* 2SG, *uu* 3SG.M, *ay* 3SG.F, etc.) in subjectal relative clauses *vs.* their frequent occurrence in non-subjectal ones. As for feature (ii.) examples (1a) and (2c) show non-subjectal relative clauses with the subject clitic *ay* meaning 'they' and, respectively, 'she', while the non-subjectal relative in (1c) lacks it. On the other hand, the subjectal relative clauses in (1b), (1c: *cargeeyay*), (1d: *baaburka saaranu* and *da' dhexaad ah*), and (2a) all lack subject clitics. As for feature (i.), the verbal forms that occur in subjectal relative clauses are identical with those that are used in main clauses with focussed subjects, as shown in examples (2a) and (2b) *vs.* the corresponding verbal form in a non-subjectal relative clause in (2c). The verbal paradigms that occur in subjectal relative clauses and with focussed subjects in main clauses typically display a reduced agreement pattern, whereby the 2SG, 2PL and 3PL are identical with the 3SG.M (see also Table 1).

(2)

a. *Gabarta*   *ku*   *arkaysa* [árkaysá]
    girl:F:the   thee   sees:PROG:3SG.F
    'The girl who is seeing you ...'

b. *Gabarta*   *ayaa*   *ku*   *arkaysa* [árkaysá]
    girl:F:the   *ayaa*   thee   sees:PROG:3SG.F
    'The GIRL is seeing you.'

c. *Maalintii*   *ay gabartu*   *ku*   *arkayso* [árkaysó]
    day:F:the   she girl:F:the:NOM thee   sees:PROG:3SG.F
    'The day that the girl will see you ...'

Finally, since the nominative case is marked phrase-finally, when the last word in the subject NP is a verb it has to get nominative case marking (notice that focussed subjects and predicate NP's in equative clauses have to be in the absolute rather than in the nominative case). As a consequence, all dependent verbal forms have a double paradigm: a non-nominative and a nominative one. This is shown in Table 1 below, where however only the 3SG.M, 3SG.F and 3PL forms of the affirmative non-past and past forms are reported, together with their corresponding forms that occur in main clauses.

Table 1. Sample affirmative relative-clause and main-clause tenses of the verb *keen* 'bring' (1st conjugation) in north-western Northern Somali (and in Muuse Galaal 1956)

(a) Non-nominative relative clause tenses

-	Non-nominative non-subjectal relative clause	Non-nominative subjectal relative clause
Non-past		
3SG.M.	keeno [ke:nó]	keena [ke:ná]
3SG.F.	keento [ke:ntó]	keenta [ke:ntá]
3PL.	keenaan [ke:nâ:n]	keena [ke:ná]
Past		
3SG.M.	keenay [ke:náj]	keenay [ke:náj]
3SG.F.	keentay [ke:ntáj]	keentay [ke:ntáj]
3PL.	keeneen [ke:nê:n]	keenay [ke:náj]

(b) Nominative relative clause tenses

-	Nominative non-subjectal relative clause	Nominative subjectal relative clause
Non-past		
3SG.M.	keenaa [ke:na:]	keenaa [ke:na:]
3SG.F.	keentaa [ke:nta:]	keentaa [ke:nta:]
3PL.	keenaan [ke:na:n]	keenaa [ke:na:]

Past

	Main clause non-focussed subject	Main clause focussed subject
3SG.M.	keenay [ke:na:j]	keenay [ke:na:j]
3SG.F.	keentay [ke:nta:j]	keentay [ke:nta:j]
3PL.	keeneen [ke:ne:n]	keenay [ke:na:j]

(c) Main clause tenses

-	Main clause non-focussed subject	Main clause focussed subject
Non-past		
3SG.M.	keenaa [ke:na:]	keena [ke:ná]
3SG.F.	keentaa [ke:nta:]	keenta [ke:ntá]
3PL.	keenaan [ke:na:n]	keena [ke:ná]
Past		
3SG.M.	keenay [ke:na:j]	keenay [ke:náj]
3SG.F.	keentay [ke:nta:j]	keentay [ke:ntáj]
3PL.	keeneen [ke:ne:n]	keenay [ke:náj]

It appears that instead of having twelve different verbal paradigms, there are two patterns of syncretism whereby: (i.) main clause forms with focussed subjects are identical with non-nominative subjectal relative forms, and (ii.) main clause forms with non-focussed subjects are identical with nominative non-subjectal relative forms. These two patterns of syncretism hold not only for suffix-conjugated verbs of the 1st conjugation like the above *keen* and of the 2nd and 3rd ones, but also for prefix-conjugated verbs and for those of the 4th conjugation. Obviously enough, varieties of Northern Somali such as Idaajaa's, that have nominative non-subjectal relative forms like past 3PL *bixiyeeni*, only display pattern (i.).

Several authors, e.g., Antinucci (1981: 240 ff.), Abdalla & Puglielli (1999: 229 ff.), and Saeed (1999: 217 ff.) have remarked that many kinds of Northern Somali subordinate clauses of time, manner, condition etc. are transparently "relative clauses on noun phrases of time, manner, etc." (Saeed 1999: 217). Such NP's are, e.g., *mar-kii* 'the time, when', *wix-ii* 'the thing, the event, while', *in-tii* 'the part, when, while' for temporal clauses, *si-dii* 'the manner, how' for manner clauses, *had-dii* 'the time, when, if' for conditional and some temporal clauses, etc. Example (3) shows that such subordinate clauses

share several features with non-subjectal relative clauses, in so far as they have the same verbal forms and have subject clitics:

(3)

Hadday	*ku*	*aragto,*	*way*	*farxaysaa*
time:F:the:she	thee	sees:3SG.M	*waa*:she	rejoices:PROG:3SG.F

'If she sees you, she'll be happy.'

Notice that *in* with no article is used as a generic complementizer 'that', both in complement clauses such as (4a), in purpose clauses (4b) and in some other contexts. In these two examples, the clauses introduced by *in* 'that' display the same two major features of non-subjectal relative clauses that have been pointed out above for subordinates introduced by *haddii*, *markii* etc.

(4)

a.
Inaanu	*Xamar*	*tegayn*	*baan*	*u*	*malaynayaa*
that:not:he	Mogadishu	go:NEG:PROG	*baa*:I	to	think:PROG:1SG

'I think that he will not go to Mogadishu.'

b.
Wuxuu	*gurigii*	*uga*	*tegay*	*inuu*	*shaqo*
waxa:he	house:M:the	for:from	went:3SM	that:he	work

doonto
looks_for:3SG.M

'He went away from home in order to find work.'

Some authors like Saeed (1999: 224) regard this generic complementizer as being etymologically related with the above *in-tii* 'the part, the amount', even though Andrzejewski (1975: 134) remarked that synchronically they are different words. Indeed, the path of grammaticalization whereby a word meaning 'part' becomes a generic complementizer like English *that* or Italian *che* is a bit complex. A more straightforward possibility is that the Northern Somali generic complementizer *in* has no etymological relation with *in* 'part, amount', and that the *in*-clauses it introduces are a syntactic loan from an Arabic dialect, where *in* is the inherited generic complementizer derived from collapsing medieval Arabic *'an ~ 'anna* and *'in ~ 'inna*. Indeed, the very feature of having a generic com-

plementizer and complement clauses introduced by it seems to be a Somali innovation, because most other East Cushitic languages lack them.

3. Internally-headed relative clauses?

Scanning texts in LS such as the three that were mentioned in § 1, one finds a considerable number of relative clauses that display the grammatical features listed in § 2. But one also finds relative clauses such as those in the following examples:

(5)

a. (Muuse Galaal 1956: 38. A group of spying scouts have been generously received by a poor man, who tells them that he has done this "because of the fear of the Lord, and in the hope of reward from men and Divine Protection" for his family. Going away one of the scouts asks his companions)

Waar,	*[ninkii]*	***hadalkuu***	*ina*	*yidhi*		*ma*
ALLOC	man:M:the	words:M:the:he	us	said:3SG.M		INT

maqlayseen?
heard:2PL

'Men, did you hear the words this man told us?'

b. (Muuse Galaal 1956: 48. A character called Cigaal Bowkax cuts the ropes that tie a herd of donkeys and shouts in order to drive them away with him)

Markaasaa	*dameerii,*	*intay*	*qoob*	*iyo*	*qaylo*
time:M:that:*baa*	donkeys:M:the	part:F:the:they	hoof	and	bray

isku	*dareen,*	*[xaggii*	*Cigaal*	*Bowkax*	*u*	*socday]*
REC:to	added:3PL	direction:M:the	Cigaal	Bowkax	to	went:3SF.M

waddadii	*qaban*	*jirtay*		*u*	*dideen*
road:F:the	lead:INF	existed:3SG.F		to	ran:3PL

'Then the donkeys (*dameerii* = *dameerihii*), galloping fast and braying (lit. 'mixing hoof and bray'), ran in fright (*dideen*) to the road which led (*qaban jirtay*) in the direction in which Cigaal Bowkax was going (*xaggii Cigaal Bowkax u socday)*'.

c. (Muuse Galaal 1956: 52. The soothsayer tells the serpent that his sultan has ordered him)

[Sannadka	*soo*	*socdaa]*	***wuxuu***		*noqon*
year:M:the	VEN	go:3SG.M:NOM	thing:M:the:he		become:INF

doon	*ka*	*warran!*
will:3SG.M	about	tell:IMPT:2SG

'Tell (us) what (*wux-*) the coming year (*sannadka soo socdaa*) will be!'.

d. (Idaajaa 1994: 4. During a meeting held by the Al-Itixaad Al-Islaami organisation after it was defeated in the north-eastern region in 1992 a number of important decisions were taken)

Waxaa	*kaloo*	*la*	*go'aamiyey*		*kooxaha*
waxa	other:and	IMPS	decided:3SG.M		groups:M:the

ururku		*inay*	*ku*	*laabtaan*	*[qabaa'ilka*
organisation:M:the:NOM		that:they	to	go_back:3PL	tribes:M:the

ay	*u*	*kala*	*dhasheeni]*	***meelaha***	*ay*
they	in	separately	were_born:3PL:NOM	places:M:the	they

kala	*degaan, halkaasna*		*ay*	*ku dhex-*	*fidiyaan*
separately	live:3PL place:M:that:and		they	in inside	spread:3PL

mabaadi'da	*Al-itixaad*	*Al-islaami.*
principles:F:the	Al-Itixaad	Al-Islaami

'It was also decided that the groups of the organisation should go back to the places where the tribes they were born in (*qabaa'ilka ay u kala dhasheeni*) were settled, and that they should spread there the principles of the Al-Itixaad Al-Islaami'.

e. (Kaddare 1983: 44. When the two elders, Waasuge amd Warsame, ask a young boy the reason of a street demonstration they see upon their arrival in Mogadishu, he answers them ill-manneredly)

[Dadkan]	***waxa***	*isu*	*keenay*	*waxba*
people:M:this	thing:M:the	REC:to	brought:3SG.M	thing:EMPH

kama	*gashaan,*	*mana*	*garan*	*kartaan*
into:not	enter:2PL	not:and	understand:INF	can:2PL

'You have nothing to do with the reason (*waxa* lit. 'the thing') that brought together these people, nor can you understand it'.

In the five above examples, the head noun of a relative clause, marked in boldface, is preceded by a constituent that semantically belongs to the relative clause and would be expected to follow, rather than precede the head noun. In (5a) and (5e) it is a noun with a determiner, whereas in (5b), (5c) and (5d) it is a complex NP that includes a second relative clause. This second relative clause is a subjectal one in (5c) but a non-subjectal one in (5b) and (5d). It appears that the constituents that precede the head nouns are informational topics that redirect the listener's or the reader's attention towards a highlighted referent: 'this man' who received us in (5a), 'the coming year' in (5c), 'these people' in (5e). The picture is slightly more complex in the other two examples: the topic of the main clause of (5b) is *dameerii* 'the (already mentioned)

donkeys', but the relative clause headed by *waddadii* 'the road' has a different topic 'the direction in which Cigaal Bowkax was going', and this is highlighted by the fact that the complex NP that expresses this different topic precedes the head *waddadii*. Not very dissimilarly, an informationally new topic is introduced by *kooxaha ururku* 'the groups of the organisation', that is provided information about by the subordinate *in*-clauses whose verbs are *ku laabtaan* 'should go back to' and *ku dhex fidiyaan* 'should spread', but a separate informationally new topic is highlighted by *qabaa'ilka ay u kala dhasheeni* 'the tribes they were born in', that is subsequently referred to by the subject clitic *ay* 'they' and by the 3PL agreement marker of the relative verb *degaan*. The subsequent *halkaas-* 'there' refers back anaphorically to the entire complex NP 'the places where the tribes etc.'

The relative clauses that allow these pre-head topics are both subjectal ones like those in (5b) and (5e), and non-subjectal ones as in (5a), (5c) and (5d). Topics that occur at the beginning of main clauses in Northern Somali can optionally lack nominative case marking even if they are non focussed subjects, but in (5c) and (5d) the verb of the relative clause that is embedded in the pre-head topic is a nominative form: *socdaa* instead of non-nominative *socda*, and *dhasheeni* instead of non-nominative *dhasheen*. It can thus be a generative linguist's delight to find evidence for proving that such pre-head topics of relative clauses moved from a position to the right of the head noun, and whether they are separate constituents that precede the head and the rest of the relative clause or not, i.e., whether the syntactic structure is [*ninkii*] [*hadalkuu ina yidhi*] or rather a more typical internally-headed relative clause like [*ninkii hadalkuu ina yidhi*] 'the words this man told us'.

For the purpose of this short paper suffice it to remark that such pre-head topics occur both with lexical head nouns as in the above examples, and with head NP's that have been partly grammaticalised as subordinate complementizers:

(6)

a. (Kaddare 1983: 60. After describing Muuse, one of the two elders' son, and his Italian wife Maria, the author adds)

[*Asaga*	*iyo*	*xaaskiisaba*]	**markii**	*aad*	*ficilkooda*
he	and	wife:M:his:the:EMPH	time:M:the	thou	act:M:their:the
iyo	*qowlkooda*		*dhuuxdid*	*waxaad*	*dareemaysaa*
and	voice:M:their:the		examine:2SG	*waxa*:thou	perceive:PROG:2SG
inay	*fikrad*	*ahaan*	*isku*	*raacsan*	*yihiin raaricinta*
that:they	opinion	being	REC:in	following	are:3PL dropping:F:the
dhaqankiisa		*iyo*	*raacidda*		*midkeeda.*
way_of_life:M:his:the		and	following:F:the		one:M:her:the

'When (*markii*) you look at the behaviour and the words of him and his wife, you perceive that they fully agree upon the idea of getting rid of his way of life and following only hers' (lit. 'that they follow each other ideally in dropping his way-of-life and following hers').

b. (Muuse Galaal 1956: 58. After being richly rewarded by the sultan, the soothsayer travels back to his home)

[*Jidka*]	**hadd**uu	*sii*	*socday*	*buu*	*waxay*
road:M:the	time:F:the:he	ITI	went:3SG.M	*baa*:he	thing:M:the:they
maskii	*ku*	*ballameen*		*xusuustay.*	
snake:M:the	on	promised:3PL		remembered:3SG.M	

'While (*hadd-*) he travelled along the road, he remembered what he had promised to the snake' (lit. 'what they [i.e., he and the snake] had promised').

c. (Muuse Galaal 1956: 50. People tell the sultan about the abilities of the soothsayer)

Markaasaa	*suldaankii*	*markuu*	[*ninkii*]	**sidii**	
time:M:that:*baa*	sultan:M:the	time:M:the:he	man:M:the	manner:F:the	
loo	*ammaanayay*	*arkay*	*is*	*yidhi:*	*"Bal*
IMPS:to	praised:PROG:3SG.M	saw:3SG.M	REF	said:3SG.M	EXCL
ninkaa	*inta*	*cilmigiisu*			*gadhsiisanyahay*
man:M:that	amount:F:the	knowledge:M:his:the:NOM			reaching:is:3SG.M
hubso".					
find_out:IMPT:2SG					

'Then, when he saw how (*sidii* lit. 'the way') that man was praised, the sultan thought (lit. 'said to himself'): "Well, I'll find out how far this man's knowledge arrives" (lit. a 2SG imperative clause)'.

Even *in*-clauses occur with topics that precede the complementizer, as in examples (7) and (5d: *kooxaha ururku inay ku laabtaan* etc. 'that the groups of the organisation should go back to etc.'). Notice that also in (7) the verb of the relative

clause that is embedded in the pre-head topic, i.e., *hadlayaa*, is marked as a nominative form, because it is the subject of *yahay* 'is'.

(7)
(Kaddare 1983: 62. Muuse's father Waasuge is addressed in a very ill-mannered way by a friend of Muuse, who is unaware that Waasuge is his friend's father)

Markay	*intaasi*		*dhacday*	*ayaa*	*Muuse*
time:M:the:it	amount:F:that:NOM		happened:3SG.F	*ayaa*	Muuse
hadalkii	*maqlay,*	*soona*	*orday*	*markuu*	
talk:M:the	heard:3SG.M	VEN:and	ran:3SG.M	time:M:the:he	
arkay	[*qofka*	*lala*	*hadlayaa*]		*inuu*
saw:3SG.M	person:M:the	IMPS:with	talk:PROG:3SG.M:NOM		that:he
aabbihiis	*yahay,*	*yirina: ...*			
father:M:his	is: 3SG.M	said:3SG.M:and			

'While this happened, Muuse heard those words, and rushed there when he saw that (*in-*) the addressed person (*qofka lala hadlayaa*) was his father, and said: ...'

Such relative and, more generally, subordinate clauses with pre-head constituents occur quite frequently in Muuse Galaal (1956) and Idaajaa (1994), but are markedly less frequent in the prose portions of Kaddare (1983). They are also quite frequent in poetry, also when Kaddare quotes Northern Somali poems. Interestingly, while in the prose portions of the corpus that was scanned for this paper only one constituent may occur before the head noun, in poetry there are also several examples with two constituents before *haddii*, as in (8) below, where this syntactic possibility is exploited for introducing a succession of new images to the listeners' attention.

(8)
(Kaddare 1983: 36. A quote from a *gabay* poem by Cumar Isteliya in praise of the *awr* 'camel bull', and alliterated in vowels)

[*Aminkhayrka*	*galabtii*]	*hadduu,*	*aaran*	*soo*
late_afternoon:M:the	afternoon:F:the	time:F:the:he	young_camels	VEN
didiyo				
urges:3SG.M				

[*Usha*]	[*kol*	*iyo*	*laba*	*jeer*]	*hadd*aad,	*yara*
stick:F:the	time	and	two	time:GEN	time:F:the:thou	a_little_bit

ogeysiiso
give_a_wink:2SG

[*Umalkii*	*uu*	*qabay*]	[*doob*]	*hadduu,*	*awda*
excitement:M:the	he	had: 3SG.M	red_palate	time:F:the:he	IDPH:F:the
kaga	*siiyo ...*				
with:from	gives:3SG.M				

'When he drives home the younger camels in the late afternoon (*aminkhayrka galabtii*),
'When you give him a small wink one or two times (*kol iyo laba jeer*) with your stick,
When he inflates his red palate because of the excitement he feels (*umalkii uu qabay*), ...'

Finally, a slightly ambiguous case is example (9), a well-known saying that has become a proverbial example of how powerful people twist the rules to their own advantage.

(9)
(Muuse Galaal 1956: 35. A sultan has ruled that if somebody's cow grazes in another person's field, the owner of the cow should pay compensation by covering a raised stick with sorghum. But when the very sultan's cow grazes where it should not, he decides what follows)

[*Hadda*]	[*usha*]	*haddii*	*la*	*jiifshona*
time:F:the	stick:F:the	time:F:the	IMPS	lays_down:3SG.M:even
bannaan				
is_all_right:3SG.F				

'Even if the stick is placed horizontally now, it is all right'.

Hadda in (9) is the Benaadiri adverbial NP 'now', and is a deictic frame-setting topic of either the entire sentence or just the conditional clause. In the second case, *hadda* and *usha* are two different constituents that precede the head *haddii* as in example (8). Notice that proverbs frequently display several features of poetic diction not only in Somali, but in most other traditions as well (cf. Banti & Giannattasio 2004: 310 f.). Here *hadda* is followed by the second topic *usha* 'the stick' that the conditional and the main clause are about. Notice furthermore that *usha* is not the overt subject of *bannaan* 'it is all right', because it is in the absolute and not in the nominative case. (The subject of *bannaan*, a 3SG.F of the 4th conjugation archa-

ic tense that is called present comparative by Andrzejewski 1975: 18, but old affirmative non-past in Banti 2004, is either the whole conditional clause *usha haddii la jiifsho*, or a Ø anaphora of *usha*).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND WORDS IN THE GLOSSES

1PL	first person plural	IMPS	impersonal subject clitic
1SG	first person singular	INF	infinitive
2PL	second person plural	INT	interrogative particle
2SG	second person singular	ITI	itive preverbal particle
3PL	third person plural	LS	Literary Somali
3SG.F	third person singular feminine	M	masculine
3SG.M	third person singular masculine	NEG	negative verbal form
ALLOC	allocutive	NOM	nominative
ayaa	NP focus particle	NP	noun phrase
baa	NP focus particle	PROG	progressive
EMPH	emphasising particle	REC	reciprocal clitic
EXCL	exclamation	REF	reflexive clitic
F	feminine	SG	singular
GEN	genitive	VEN	ventive preverbal particle
IDPH	ideophone	*waa*	predicate focus particle
IMPT	imperative	*waxa*	introductory word of a *waxa*-cleft

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