

# The Origin of the Jiiddu of Somalia

MARCELLO LAMBERTI

University of Köln - Köln

## Jiiddu and the Other Somali Dialects

There is no doubt that the idiom spoken by the Jiiddus of Somalia is nowadays a Somali dialect. This is proved in fact by many common features that Jiiddu shares with the other Somali dialects like for instance:

1. Jiiddu presents the same phonological system of the other Somali dialects of Upper Juba (May and Digil).
2. The focus system of Jiiddu fully agrees with that of the other Upper Juba dialects. The focus particles are *baa*, *yaa*, and *yey* just like in Somali.
3. The syntax of Jiiddu fully agrees with that of the other Somali dialects.
4. The personal pronouns of Jiiddu are nothing else than the regular correspondence of the Somali ones, cf.

	Jiiddu	Somali	Dabarre
1sg.	<i>anë</i>	<i>ani-ga</i>	<i>innë</i>
2sg.	<i>adë</i> etc.	<i>adi-ga</i>	<i>idë</i>
3msg.	<i>ossë/essë</i>	<i>isa-ga</i>	<i>ussë</i>
3fsg.	<i>issë</i>	<i>iya-da</i>	<i>issë</i>
1pl.	<i>unnë</i>	<i>inna-ga</i>	<i>unnë</i>
2pl.	<i>essen</i>	<i>idin-ka</i>	<i>issin</i>
3pl.	<i>ussë</i>	<i>iya-ga</i>	<i>ussow</i>

The correspondence of the forms of the 3rd person is regular as they agree with the sound laws of the respective dialects.

5. Also in the numerals one finds full agreement between Jiiddu and the other Somali dialects, cf.

	Jiiddu	Somali
one	<i>koow</i>	<i>koow</i>
two	<i>lawë/lammë</i>	<i>laba/lamma</i>
three	<i>seejë</i>	<i>saddex</i>
four	<i>afar</i>	<i>afar</i>
five	<i>shan</i>	<i>shan</i>
six	<i>li'</i>	<i>lix</i>
seven	<i>saybë</i>	<i>toddoba</i>

eight	<i>siyeed</i>	<i>siddeed/siyeed</i>
nine	<i>sagaal</i>	<i>sagaal</i>
ten	<i>toman/tommon</i> (borrowing from Southern-Somali) and so on	<i>toban/tommon</i>

Also historically Jiiddu presents the same development that we can ascertain for the other Somali dialects, cf. for instance:

1. intervocalic *\*k* > *h*, cf. Ji. *lohē* 'leg' < EC *\*luk-* and the morphophonemic alternation of the gender consonant for masculines *k/h* in Somali *nin-ka* 'the man' vs. *waraaba-ha* 'the hyena'.
2. palatalization of *\*g*, *\*k* and *\*k'*, cf.  
EC *\*gilub-* > Ji. *jelow* 'knee' and Somali *jilib* (id.);  
EC *\*ken-* > Ji. and Somali *shan* 'five';  
EC *\*k'eb-* > Ji. *j'aw-* 'to break', Somali *jab-* (id.).  
Among the Eastern Cushitic languages only Oromo and the Sam languages have undergone a palatalization process of the velars.
3. sonorization of *\*t*, *\*k'* and *\*c'* (< palatalized *\*k'*). cf.  
EC *\*atu* > Ji. *adē* 'you' (pronoun of the 2sg.), Somali *adi-ga* (id.);  
EC *\*k'ab-* > Ji. *g'ow-* 'to possess', May/Tunni/Dabarre *g'ob-* (id.);  
*\*c'eb* (< EC *\*k'eb-*) > Ji. *j'aw-* 'to break', Somali *jab-* (id.);  
and so on

Nevertheless Jiiddu seems to be a bit apart from the other Somali dialects. In fact it also presents features which do not harmonize with the corresponding ones of Somali. The Somalis themselves find that the Jiiddu dialect presents some unexpected features, which are extraneous to their language and also among Somalists somebody (like for instance Biber) has suggested the possibility that Jiiddu could also be something else than Somali. I personally regard Jiiddu as a Somali dialect and I think it can only be classified as such because of the reasons reported above.

### The Substratum of Jiiddu

But if one regards Jiiddu as a Somali dialect, one should also try to explain the considerable divergences which separate Jiiddu from the other Somali dialects and this is just the goal of this paper.

Among the Jiiddu themselves one has to distinguish two main Jiiddu branches, namely the Jiiddu of Somalia, who speak the Somali dialect in question and the Jiiddu of Ethiopia. Most Jiiddu in fact live in Ethiopia and make up an Oromo clan. Nowadays they speak an Oromo dialect. According to the Somali tradition Jiiddu (the ancestor of the Jiiddu clan) was the brother of Booraan (the ancestor of an Oromo clan) and as such he was of Oromo origin. According to that one would assume that today's Jiiddu dialect of Somalia presents an Oromo substratum. Although it surely shares with Oromo many features (which however occur also in Somali, so that it is difficult to say whether they have been taken from Oromo or from Somali), there is hardly evidence for an Oromo substratum. Nevertheless the Jiiddu-Somali divergences need an explanation. The best way of explaining them is, I think, to assume an old substratum which still survives in Jiiddu in

a few relics. This assumption is corroborated by the fact that the Jiiddu morphemes missing in Somali are clearly of Cushitic origin. In order to qualify this hypothetical substratum I applied the following procedure:

1. I collected all the noteworthy features of Jiiddu, which do not have any correspondence in the other Somali dialects;
2. I looked for probable correspondences in the other Cushitic languages;
3. then I compared the Jiiddu features that separate it from Somali, with the correspondences found.

The Jiiddu features taken into consideration for comparison, were:

1. the spirantization of initial *\*k-* to *h-*, cf.  
 Ji. *hor* 'body' < *\*kor-* > Somali *kor* (id.)  
 Ji. *haw* 'shoe' < *\*kaba* > Somali *kab* (id.);
2. the development *\*z > y* (also shared by Rendille), cf.  
 Ji. *waynē* 'heart' < *\*waznaa*,  
 Ji. *meyg* 'right side' < *\*mizga*;
3. the plural marker *-d'ë*, cf.  
*el* 'eye' → pl. *el-d'ë*,  
*ilkē* 'tooth' → pl. *ilka-d'ë*;
4. the existence of demonstratives like *ekkē/ettē* 'this' and *ekaakē/etaatē* 'that';
5. object pronoun of the 1st sg. *aku*, cf.  
*Ali baa aku hoogey* 'it was Ali, who beat me';
6. object pronoun of the 1st plural *noku*, cf.  
*Ali noku deegni* 'Ali will see us';
7. possessive adjective of the, 1st sg. *-shē*, cf.  
*beel-shē* 'my friend', *ii-shē* 'my mother';
8. plural pronominalizing prefix *haar-*, cf.  
*hoo-m/too-m* 'which one' → pl. *haar-mē* 'which ones',  
*hoo-kēs/too-dēs* 'his/hers' → pl. *haarē-kēs*;
9. benefactive/dative preverb *is*, cf.  
*s-is shüig'ë* 'tell him', *aku-s shüig'ë* 'tell me';
10. preterital endings in *-ooku/-tooku/-nooku* etc., cf.  
 1sg./3msg. *j'am-ooku* 'I wanted'  
 2sg./3fsg. *j'am-tooku*  
 1pl. *j'am-nooku*  
 2pl. *j'am-tookun*  
 3pl. *j'am-ookun*;
11. the periphrastic preterite presenting the auxiliary *aw-*, cf.  
 1sg./3msg. *shiy-away* 'I went/I had gone'  
 2sg./3fsg. *shiy-awtey*  
 1pl. *shiy-awney*  
 2pl. *shiy-awten*  
 3pl. *shiy-awen*;
12. present endings in *-ni/-nettē/-nen* etc., cf.  
 1sg./3msg. *j'am-ni* 'I want'  
 2sg./3fsg. *j'am-nettē*  
 1pl. *j'am-nen*  
 2pl. *j'am-netta*  
 3pl. *j'am-niya*;

13. formation of the future tense by using the auxiliary *g'ow-* 'to have', cf. *anē furshaal-g'owē* 'I will cook';
14. use of the auxiliary *yed'-/yer* 'to be/exist/lie', cf. the endings of the negative present;
15. conditional endings in *-aaley/-aatey/-aaney* etc., cf.
  - 1sg./3msg. *j'am-aaley* 'I would like',
  - 2sg./3fsg. *j'am-aatey* 'you would like' etc.;
16. negative preterit in *-ēb/-tēb/-nēb* etc., cf.
  - 1sg./3msg. *mē leeged-ēb* 'I did not kill'
  - 2sg./3fsg. *mē leeged-dēb* etc.
  - 1pl. *mē leeged-nēb*
  - 2pl. *mē leeged-dab*
  - 3pl. *mē leeged-ab*;
17. endings of the negative present in *nimiir* (< \**-ni ma yed'o*) /-*nimiitē* (< \**-ni ma yetto*) /-*nimiin* (< \**-ni ma yed'no*), etc., cf.
  - 1sg./3msg. *j'am-nimiir* 'I don't want'
  - 2sg./3fsg. *j'am-nimiitē*
  - 1pl. *j'am-nimiinē*
  - 2pl. *j'am-nimiita*
  - 3pl. *j'am-nimiira*
18. ending of the negative subjunctive *-n-ekke*, cf.
 

*in anē ha jis-n-ekke* 'that I don't give it'.

In order to avoid misunderstandings it must be again pointed out that these features were chosen according to the criterion, that they are not shared by the other Somali dialects. Otherwise Jiiddu agrees with Somali (and also with a lot of other Cushitic languages) in many respects.

### Jiiddu within Cushitic

According to the features reported above Jiiddu presents the greatest agreement within Cushitic with the languages of the Konsoid group, and among these the coincidences with D'iraassh<sup>a</sup> are particularly striking. Total agreement with Konsoid was ascertained for the following features:

1. the plural marks Ji. *-d'ē*, D'iraassh<sup>a</sup> and Konso *-dd'a*, cf.

D'i. *arrapa* 'tongue' → pl. *arrapa-dd'a*,

*iil-t<sup>a</sup>* 'eye' → pl. *in-d'a*,

Ko. *ilka* 'tooth' → pl. *ilka-dd'a*,

*il-ta* 'eye' → pl. *il-d'a*.

This kind of plural seems to be characteristic of the languages of the Ethiopian Province of Gamu Gofa, cf. Gawada *-add'e*, Zaysse *-ir* (with \**d'* > *r*) and also Arbore *-d'a* (cf. Hayward 1984: 178);

2. present endings, cf.

	Ji.	Ko.	D'iraassh <sup>a</sup>	Gawada
1sg.	<i>-ni</i>	<i>-niyo</i>	<i>-nin-kiy<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>-na</i>
3msg.	<i>-ni</i>	<i>-niyo</i>	<i>-niy<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>-na</i>
2sg.	<i>-nettē</i>	<i>-nittu</i>	<i>-ni-kkish<sup>i</sup></i>	<i>-nay</i>
3fsg.	<i>-nettē</i>	<i>-nittu</i>	<i>-nish<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>-nay</i>
1pl.	<i>-nen</i>	<i>-ninnu</i>	<i>-nin-ki</i>	<i>-nani</i>

2pl.	-netta	-nittan	-ni-kkishani <sup>i</sup>	-nanku
3pl.	-niya	-niyan	-niyan <sup>i</sup>	-nanki

The Konso paradigm refers to present tense and is used only in relative clauses. The D'iraassh<sup>a</sup> one is present continuous tense and the Gawada forms are present/future like the Ji. ones;

3. \**k-* > *h-*: EC \**k-* has developed to *h-* in D'iraassh<sup>a</sup> and to *kh-* in Konso, cf.

EC \**kimbir-* > D'i. *hampira* 'birds', Ko. *khampira* (id.).

In Dullay \**k-* has developed to *h-* and *kh-* according to the respective dialects, cf.

EC \**kimbir-* > D'i. *hampira* 'birds', Ko. *khampira* (id.);

4. dative/benefactive marker *is*: this morpheme has been ascertained in Bilin and in Western Cushitic (Ometo cluster, Shinasha, Janjero); but within Eastern Cushitic only Oromo (-*Vf*) and D'iraassh<sup>a</sup> (-*ss<sup>i</sup>*) present it, cf. D'i. *inkoot<sup>a</sup> seette-ss<sup>i</sup>* 'to that woman', Oromo *gurbicca-af* 'for the boy';

5. negative preterite: cf. the Ji. endings reported above -*ëb/-tëb/-nëb/-tab/-ab* with the negative preterite in D'iraassh<sup>a</sup>

	D'iraassh <sup>a</sup>	
1sg.	<i>amme he-ñ</i>	<i>aan-em</i> 'I did not go'
3msg.	<i>amme he</i>	<i>aan-em</i> etc.
2sg./3fsg.	<i>amme he</i>	<i>aan-tem</i>
1pl.	<i>amme he-ñ</i>	<i>aan-nem</i>
2pl.	<i>amme he</i>	<i>aan-tenem</i>
3pl.	<i>amme he</i>	<i>aan-enem</i>
	<i>aan-</i> (stem of the verb « to go »),	
	<i>amme</i> (not, negation), <i>he</i> (focus particle).	

Gide'o and Alaba are the closest languages to Jiiddu after those of the Konsoid Group. In fact Jiiddu shares also many common features with Highland East Cushitic. This suggests that the Jiiddu people must have had quite close relation with HEC-speakers. Some of these agreements between Jiiddu and HEC are:

1. object pronoun of the 1pl.: Ji. *noku*, Sidamo *-nke* (pronominal verbal suffix of the 1pl.), cf.

Sidamo *gani-nke* 'he beat us' vs. *gani* 'he beat'.

Cf. also Gide'o *no'o* ('we', pronoun of the 1pl.) and Alaba *na'u* (id.);

2. demonstrative forms:

Ji. *ekkë/ettë* 'this',

Sid. *hakku/hatte* 'that',

Gide'o *okkone/ettene* 'that',

Hadiya *okki* 'that one' and *kuuki/tuuti* 'this one',

Alaba/Kambatta *hikka/hitta* 'that'.

Similar demonstrative forms are also found in the other Sidama-languages (i.e. Omotic), cf.

Shinasha *ekkewi* 'that',

Janjero *ak* (id.),

Wolayta *hegge* 'that' and *hage* 'this'.

But the demonstrative forms of Bayso are the closest ones to those of Jiiddu, cf.

	this	that
Bayso	<i>hikki/hitti</i>	<i>aakki/aatti</i>
Jiiddle	<i>ekkë/ettë</i>	<i>ekaa-kë/etaa-të;</i>
3. ending of the negative subjunctive Ji. <i>-n-ekkë</i> (s. above): Sidamo <i>-nke</i> (suffix of the negative jussive), Gide'ö <i>-kk'e</i> (id.), Alaba/Kambatta <i>-nka</i> (id.), cf.		
	Sidamo	Gide'ö
3msg.	<i>assoo-nke</i> 'he shall not do it'	<i>asso-kk'e</i> (id.)
3fsg.	<i>assitoo-nke</i> etc.	<i>assito-kk'e</i>
1pl.	<i>assinoo-nke</i>	<i>assinaanno-kk'e</i>
3pl.	<i>assitoo-nke</i>	<i>assino-kk'e</i>
	Alaba/Kambatta	
3msg.	<i>itu-nka</i> 'he shall not eat'	
3fsg.	<i>ittu-nka</i> etc.	
1pl.	<i>intu-nka</i>	
3pl.	<i>intu-nka</i> (Alaba)/ <i>iteenu-nka</i> (Kambatta).	

The suffixation of a morpheme containing *-kk-* is a characteristic of the negative conjugation of the Omoto languages; however there *-kk-* is not limited to the subjunctive (like in Jiiddle) or the jussive (like in HEC), but it is also used to negate the indicative, cf.

	Dac'e	
1sg	<i>ta be'-ikke</i> 'I do not see'	<i>ta be'-ar-ke</i> 'I did not see'
2sg.	<i>ne be'-akka</i>	<i>ne be'-ar-ka</i>
3fsg.	<i>iza be'-ukku</i>	<i>iza be'-ar-ko</i>
1pl.	<i>nu be'-okko</i>	<i>nu be'-or-ko</i>
2pl.	<i>hinte be'-ekkeeta</i>	<i>hinte be'-ar-keeta</i>

4. the Ji. preterital endings *-ooku/-tooku/-nooku/-tookun/-ookun* correspond to the preterital morphemes *-ukko* and *-akko'o* and the paradigm of the present perfect of Hadiya, cf.

	Hadiya	
	preterite	
3msg.	<i>it' mar-ukko</i> 'he went'	
2pl.	<i>ki'nuwi mat-takko'o</i> etc.	
3sg.	<i>iss<sup>e</sup> mar-akko'o</i> (polite form)	
	compound perfect	
3msg.	<i>it' mar-aakko</i> 'he has gone'	
3fsg.	<i>ise mat-tookko</i> etc.	
2pl.	<i>ki' nuwi mattaakko' ookko</i>	
3pl.	<i>iss<sup>e</sup> mar-aakko'ookko</i>	

Kambatta presents a post-verbal particle *ikke* in order to express past tense, cf.  
Kambatta *ani ita-yoommi ikke* 'I was eating'

vs.

*ani ita-yoommi* 'I'm eating'.

Anyway preterital endings containing a velar have been ascertained also in Central Cushitic, cf.

	Bilin	
1sg.	<i>q<sup>w</sup>al-kh<sup>w</sup>ën</i> 'I saw'	1pl. <i>q<sup>w</sup>al-nëkh<sup>w</sup>ën</i>
2sg.	<i>q<sup>w</sup>al-dukh<sup>w</sup></i> etc.	2pl. <i>q<sup>w</sup>al-dënukh<sup>w</sup></i>
3msg.	<i>q<sup>w</sup>al-ukh<sup>w</sup></i>	3pl. <i>q<sup>w</sup>al-nukh<sup>w</sup></i>
3fsg.	<i>q<sup>w</sup>al-ti.</i>	

## Conclusions

- From all what has been said above it is to be concluded that
- a) although Jiiddu is to be regarded as a Somali dialect, it differs in several respects from the other Somali dialects;
  - b) the isoglosses, by which Jiiddu differentiates from Somali, mainly point at some specially close contacts first with the languages of the Konsoid group and second with the Highland East Cushitic languages;
  - c) as the Jiiddu features, that don't have any correspondence in Somali, can be only regarded as substratum (adstratum and superstratum are out of question, because of the geographic distribution of Jiiddu itself and of the other languages concerned), it is assumed here that the Jiiddu people originate from Ethiopia and exactly from the Ethiopian province of Gamu Gofa (most of the isoglosses separating Jiiddu from Somali clearly point at that region).

Originally the Jiiddu people should have spoken an idiom belonging to the Konsoid group and similar to that of the D'iraassh<sup>a</sup>. Because of still unknown reasons the Jiiddu emigrated from Gamu Gofa towards the East until they reached the present province of Sidamo. There they probably had close contacts with the HEC population and especially with the Gide'o people. These contacts are reflected in some common features that join Jiiddu to the other Highland East Cushitic languages. After that the Jiiddu people probably separated into two main branches, i.e. a first group settled down in the Bale province and accepted later the Oromo culture and language in consequence of the influence of the Oromo who lived there. Nowadays the descendants of those Jiiddu are fully oromized and constitute an autonomous clan within the Oromo nation. The second group, that was smaller than the first one, continued the migration that their ancestors had begun in Gamu Gofa and emigrated towards south-east. They reached Somalia and settled down in the Lower Shabelle region. There they underwent a Somalization process, according to which they adopted the Somali language and culture. Only a few linguistic relics nowadays reveal the origin of the Jiiddu people. It is difficult to say whether also the Jiiddu of Somalia were oromized before they emigrated to Somalia. In any case an Oromo substratum can not be proved for Af-Jiiddu.

## References

- Hayward, D. 1984, « The Arbore Language. A First Investigation », in H.J. Sasse (ed.) *Kuschitische Sprachstudien*, Hamburg, Helmut Buske Verlag.

## List of symbols and abbreviations

- ë corresponds to IPA schwa (ə)  
kh corresponds to IPA x'  
kh<sup>w</sup> corresponds to IPA x<sup>w</sup>  
q<sup>w</sup> correspondes to IPA q<sup>w</sup>  
ñ correspondes to IPA ŋ  
Raised final vowels (i.e. <sup>a</sup> or <sup>i</sup>) correspond to devoiced vowels. All the other symbols are the same as IPA.

*Linguistics*

D'i.	=	D'iraassh <sup>a</sup>	pl.	=	plural
EC.	=	Eastern Cushitic	1pl.	=	first person plural
			2pl.	=	second person plural
			3pl.	=	third person plural
HEC	=	Highland East Cushitic	sg.	=	singular
			1sg.	=	first person singular
			2sg.	=	second person singular
Ji.	=	Jiiddu	3fsg.	=	third person feminine singular
K.	=	Konso			
Sid.	=	Sidamo	3msg.	=	third person masculine singular