

Mauro Tosco
Af Tunni

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Mauro Tosco

Af Tunni

Grammar, Texts, and Glossary
of a Southern Somali Dialect



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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ABS	absolute case
ANP	anaphoric determiner
ART	article
CLFT	cleft verbal marker
F	feminine
GEN	genitive case
H	high tone
IMP	impersonal pronoun
IND	indefinite determiner
INT	1. interrogative clitic; 2. interrogative determiner
JUSS	jussive marker
M	masculine
NEG	1. negative particle; 2. negative verbal form
N-P	non-past verbal marker
NS	Northern Somali (in the Standard Somali Orthography)
P	plural
PP	phonological process
PROG	progressive conjugation
PST	past verbal form
RED	reduplicated stem
REFL	reflexive pronoun
S	singular
SUBJ	subject case
T	Tunni
VOC	vocative case
/x/	phonemic transcription
[x]	phonetic transcription
=	morpheme boundary (in glosses)
.	intra-morpheme boundary (in glosses)
≠	word-final position
≠≠	utterance-final position

In translations, square brackets are “etic” and contain additions to adjust to the standard or frame of reference of the target language, while round brackets are “emic” and contain literal translations from the original which are redundant or inadmissible in the target language.

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE TUNNI PEOPLE

The Tunni are one of the major groups of the interriverine area of Southern Somalia. They occupy the area between the sea and the Shabeelle river and between the Juba river to the SW, up to a point approximately midway between Brava and Merka to the NE. The informants considered the Tunni territory to stretch from Goob Weyn ⁽¹⁾ northwards up to Eeriile ⁽²⁾. The Tunni have a mixed agricultural–pastoral economy, with the pastoralists practising transhumance between the hinterland and the coast ⁽³⁾. No recent and reliable data on their number is available; the Italian Census of 1931 reported a figure of around 20,000 (Lewis 1955: 50).

Agnatically, the Tunni have been generally subsumed under the Digil clan–family — e.g., by Caniglia (1935) and Barile (1935), followed by Lewis (1955) — or as a distinct group (by Colucci 1924). As we shall see, the agnatic membership has had its repercussions upon the classification of their dialect.

Politically, the Tunni are a confederation of 5 sections (*gamàas*): *daagtíra*, *daafaráad*, *werfile*, *gooygáal*, and *hufúubu* ⁽⁴⁾. Each *gamàas* is further subdivided into 4 *rèer*. According to Colucci, the ancestors of the Tunni lived across the Juba; around the 10th or 11th century (according to Lewis 1955: 33), three Tunni groups passed the Juba in the area of present–day Luuq and two others near the mouth of the river. Around these original groups the five modern *gamàas* were formed through the aggregation of people of various tribal origins — as discussed by Colucci, who reports a number of traditions concerning the origin of the *rèer* and the *gamàas*, and the folk–etymologies of their names.

0. 2. THE TUNNI DIALECT

The Southern Somali dialect known as Af Tunni (‘speech of the Tunni’) is spoken in the interriverine region of Somalia by members of the Tunni clan. According to Lamberti’s (1983a) classification of the Somali dialects — until today the most comprehensive — Tunni is grouped within the Digil dialects, alongside Jiiddu, Dabarre and Karre (mainly known as Garre). Lamberti himself admits the dubious status of this group:

‘Dies ist die heterogenste Dialektgruppe Somalias und es ist überhaupt fraglich, ob man diese Dialekte in eine einzige Gruppe zusammenfassen kann, oder ob nicht eher jeder einzelne Dialekt eine Gruppe für sich bildet’ (Lamberti 1983a: 56).

More specifically, Tunni would be ‘der Digil–Dialekt, der am stärksten vom May beeinflusst worden ist’ (Lamberti 1983a: 57).

Lamberti's classification being essentially descriptive and synchronic, a Digil group is easily admissible as an areal cluster. In order to avoid the genetic bias which the use of a clanic name as "Digil" would imply and to stress the synchronic character of such a grouping, a better label would perhaps be "pastoral interriverine Somali" (to separate it from the Maay dialects, spoken mainly by the agricultural population, though widely known and used in Southern Somalia as a koine — influencing the pastoral dialects). In the absence of interdialectal data, the idea that a bundle of common areal traits links together these dialects at all levels of analysis may be accepted as a very plausible hypothesis, but will not be elaborated any further in the following.

In Tosco (1993a and forthc.) I discussed the problem of the historical relevance of a Digil group of dialects, reaching the conclusion that at least Karre and Digil must be detached from it.

On the other hand, the idea of historical unity of the Southern Somali dialects seems to be an unknown concept among the Somalis themselves, who are instead well aware of the relative extraneousness of these dialects to the Somali common linguistic stock (cf. the proverbs and stories about the dialects and their "difficulty" collected in Cerulli 1959: 267 foll.). This strangeness of the Southern dialects, but without any close genetic link among themselves, has been elaborated in Ehret and Ali's (1984) classification of the Somali dialects. This proposal, which embraces not only Somali and the closely related Rendille and Boni, but also the more distantly related Bayso, is based upon the logical assumption that the most divergent languages and dialects represent earlier splits from "Common Proto-Somali". Jiiddu and Bayso would represent the first and most ancient division of "Soomaali"; after the split of Rendille from "Soomaali II", the other "Digil" dialects would separate from the rest of Somali ("Soomaali III"), under two coordinated branches: Karre-Boni and "Juba" — i.e. Tunni and "Baardheere". All the other Somali dialects would be the result of more recent splits — thence their relative closeness: first Maay, and then the different dialects of Northern Somali (the "Ashraaf" dialects are not taken into account by Ehret and Ali). What is meant by "Baardheere" dialect is not clear at all (cf. Lamberti 1984: 194) — some kind of Dabarre being the most plausible guess. Nevertheless, Ehret and Ali's conclusion is that Tunni is closer to Dabarre (= "Baardheere") than to Karre, and closer to Karre than to Jiiddu, Maay and the rest of Somali. Schematically:

$$\{ \{ [(\text{Tunni}) (\text{Dabarre})] \text{Karre} \} \dots \}$$

Summing up, Lamberti's work is based upon dialect comparison at all levels; Ehret and Ali's one upon lexical and phonological innovations. Both approaches run the risk of giving historical genetical significance to what may well be the result of areal contact and mutual influence.

According to Lamberti (1983a: 439), Tunni (henceforth: T) shares with Maay the highest number of common "innovations" (both presumably genetic and areally-induced)

— 82.082%, a figure only slightly higher than the percentage of the T–Dabarre common innovations (79.372 %). The difference is given by the exclusive Maay–T developments **/h + n/ → /nn/* and **/h + t/ → /tt/*. The other Southern dialects (Karre, Boni, and Jiiddu) range, in this order, between approx. 73% and 59%; by way of comparison, the T–Northern Somali (: NS) percentage of shared innovation is 39.118%.

The problems arising from Lamberti’s counting of innovations are evident: first, the innovations based upon the deviation from Lamberti’s own reconstruction of Proto–Somali are not always acceptable. Secondly, each kind of development is given the same weight; e.g. the same historical classificatory significance is accorded to the initial devoicing of Karre and Boni — a highly significant historical rule, which puts these dialects together, compared with all the rest of Somali — and to the rule **/g, k + t/ → /gd/* — a restricted synchronic assimilatory pattern, which would be found in T and Oroole (a sub–dialect of Dabarre) only, compared with all the rest of Somali — in which **/g, k + t/ → /kt/* ⁽⁵⁾.

Even discounting a good deal of Lamberti’s “innovations” as reflecting areal tendencies and historical influences, it still holds true that at least T and Dabarre are particularly close in both Lamberti’s and Ehret and Ali’s classification, and that T, Dabarre and Maay have a lot in common.

This is also true of most phonological historical rules proposed by Lamberti (1983a), such as the rule neutralizing final **/q/*, **/ʔ/* and **/h/* into **/ʔ/* (Lamberti 1983a: 302), or the rules changing **/s/* into **/ʔ/* and **/h/* into **/h/* (Lamberti 1983a: 337) — both of which have operated in both Maay and “Digil” (Karre and Boni included).

In the following, a few morphological features of T, Dabarre and Maay (with other Somali dialects referred to from time to time for comparison) will be evaluated. The tentative conclusion will be that nothing connects T with the “Digil” dialects, which does not link them with Maay either, and that T is better regarded as an independent branch of Southern Somali.

0.3. ASPECTS OF TUNNI MORPHOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF COMPARATIVE SOMALI DIALECTOLOGY

0.3.1. Past 3M ≠ 1S: innovation or retained archaism?

As discussed in Ch. 3, in T the Past and Non–Past verbal paradigms have been reduced to a single set distinguished only in the 3M (apart from the marker *sə* which is obligatorily found before a Non–Past verb). Also the 2P and 3P endings are alike in the Past and the Non–Past and are, respectively, *-teen* and *-een*. */ee/* in these forms is possibly due to the palatalization of stressed **/aa/* — which caused the Non–Past endings **-taan* and **-aan* to be identical to the Past endings. Such a palatalization is found, e.g. in:

Tunni	vs.	Karre	gloss
<i>êes</i>		<i>aas</i>	‘grass’
<i>igees-</i>		<i>igaas- [~ igees-]</i>	‘to kill’

and in:

Tunni	vs.	NS	gloss
<i>ugees-</i>		<i>ugaas-</i>	‘to hunt’
<i>éed...î</i>	vs.	<i>aad...u</i>	‘very much’

The other persons have a uniform ending $-\text{ə}$ (as in K, vs. $-\text{i}$ of both Maay and Dabarre). T alone has $-\text{i}$ in the 3M of the Past vs. $-\text{ə}$ of the 1S and of the Non-Past (in both 3M and 1S). This fact is not totally isolated within Somali, but the dialects with a 3M ending $/\text{i}/ \neq$ 1S are members of different groups: other than T, they are the Ashraaf and, according to Lamberti, also the Abgaal dialect (a member of the Benaadir group and ultimately, therefore, NS).

As it is highly unlikely that an opposition has been created anew in T for the Past paradigm, it seems probable that the T Past is not derived from the same paradigm as reflected in the NS Independent Past in $*-\text{ay}$, but from a verbal form similar to the “Short” (or “Independent”) Past of NS. This is a verbal paradigm mostly used in poetry and fixed expressions and characterized, as the name implies, by shorter endings than the “normal” Past and the lack of any verbal classifier or verbal focus marker (such as NS *waa*).

The following line of reasoning has been proposed by Banti (1985: 50) to explain final $-\text{i}$ of the 3M Past in Ashraaf, but it holds true for T too, and it is all the more interesting since both T and Ashraaf lack a verbal or neutral focus marker (or verbal classifier) similar to NS *waa*.

According to Banti, Ashraaf *ʕuɲi* ‘he ate’ would NOT be the historical equivalent of the NS Past *cunay* ($/\text{ʕunay}/$), but of *cunyay* ($/\text{ʕɲnyay}/$), a variant form of the 3M Short Past *cun* ($/\text{ʕɲn}/$). Both NS forms *ʕɲnyay* and *ʕɲn* would stem from an original 3M $*\text{ʕɲɲi}$: in one case the Past ending $-\text{ay}$ would have been added (yielding *ʕɲnyay*), in the other the final $-\text{j}$ would have been dropped and its [+ATR] value transferred unto the first vowel, yielding *ʕɲn*. In the 3M \neq 1S dialects the Past ending $-\text{i}$ — corresponding to NS $-\text{ay}$ — was then added to $*\text{ʕɲni}$, yielding Ashraaf *ʕuɲi* (through $*\text{ʕɲn-y-i}?$) and T *úni*. The same Past ending was instead affixed directly to the stem in the case of 1S, resulting in Ashraaf *ʕuni* and T *únə*.

The same hypothesis enables us to understand the isogloss shared again by T and Ashraaf in the 3M Past of the C3 (Reflexive–Middle) verbs (cf. below, 0.3.2.), which in both T and Ashraaf lack the $-\text{d-}$ marker of this verbal extension; we thus find such forms as T *obsíyi* and Ashraaf *ʕabsayi* ‘he feared’ vs. T *obsáðə*, Ashraaf *ʕabsati* ‘I feared’ (Ajello 1984: 136 ff.). This development is explained by Lamberti (1983a: 358) with an ad hoc rule

*-*d* + *y* → *y*. According to Banti the 3M forms should instead correspond to the NS Short Past *cabsay* (/ʕābsaý/) to which -*i* would have been affixed; in the 1S forms the -*d*-extension would have been there to begin with (cf. NS *cabsaday* — /ʕabsáday/).

To conclude, final -*i* in the 3M Past in T is unique among the Southern dialects, but is better explained as a retained archaism than as an autonomous innovation. Strictly speaking, no inference can be made out of it for the classification of the Southern dialects.

0.3.2. Extended Verbs

In the causative verbs the lexical extension -*s*- of Somali has completely disappeared in T, its only trace being the gemination of the marker of 1P -*n* and the final -*s* of the thematic noun (cf. II.1.5.2.1.); the palatal glide -*y*- which, as in NS, precedes the vocalic person markers (1S, 3M, and 3P) is fully predictable on the basis of the Phonological Processes of T (cf. I.1.4.3., Glide Insertion, PP 5.). In this regard T is similar to NS, Karre-Boni, Ashraaf and Rendille in having assimilated forms of 1P **s* + -*n* → -*nn*-, compared with Jiiddu and Dabarre -*šn*-/-*sn*-. Before -*t*, assimilation occurs in T as in NS, but anticipatorily in T (**s* + -*t* → *-*tt*- → -*t*), perseveratively in NS (**s* + -*t* → *-*ss*- → -*s*-) — while Jiiddu and Dabarre again show no assimilation (-*št*-/-*st*-): in other words, Dabarre and Jiiddu have generalized the extension -*s*- to the whole paradigm (in much the same way of Maay, which has generalized -*y*-). Karre, on the other hand, shows the same morphological patterning of NS, with a fricativization rule **t* → *s* / V__V. In short, the only parallelism between T and the “Digil” dialects is the reduction of the allomorphy in the conjugation of the causative verbs.

Table 1
Past Affirmative of causative verbs

	Tunni 'to give'	Dabarre 'to cook'	Maay 'to count'	Karre 'to give'	NS 'to give'
1S	<i>siiyə</i>	<i>kərəsi</i>	<i>tíriyi</i>	<i>siiyə</i>	<i>siiyay</i>
2S	<i>síitə</i>	<i>kərəsti</i>	<i>tíriydi</i>	<i>siisə</i>	<i>siisay</i>
3M	<i>siiyi</i>	<i>karəsi</i>	<i>tíriyi</i>	<i>siiyə</i>	<i>siiyay</i>
3F	<i>síitə</i>	<i>karəsti</i>	<i>tíriydi</i>	<i>siisə</i>	<i>siisay</i>
1P	<i>síinnə</i>	<i>karəsni</i>	<i>tíriyni</i>	<i>sii[n]nə</i>	<i>siinnay</i>
2P	<i>siitèen</i>	<i>karəstəŋ</i>	<i>tíriydeŋ</i>	<i>siiseen</i>	<i>siiseen</i>
3P	<i>siiyəen</i>	<i>karəseŋ</i>	<i>tíriyeen</i>	<i>siyeen</i>	<i>siyeen</i>

Sources: Dabarre: Lamberti (1980: 66)

Maay: Saeed (1982: 23)

Karre: Tosco (1988: 91)

The analogical simplification of the verbal paradigms has been further extended in T to the reflexive–middle (or autobenefactive) verbs of the C3 conjugation (cf. III.3.1.1.). As in other Southern dialects, no syllable reduction occurs. Two regular phonological processes of T, which prescribe first the anticipatory assimilation of a dental cluster (PP 14., Voicing Assimilation: /dt/ → /tt/), followed by the degemination of a dental geminate (PP 17., Dental Degemination: /tt/ → /t/), are responsible for */dt/ → /t/, yielding such forms as *qobáṣtə* ‘you/she seized’. The whole paradigm can thus be derived from a lexical extension –*əd*–, without intervening morphonological rules, except for the –*[y]i* marker of 3M Past, which, as anticipated above (0.3.1.), is affixed directly (through an intervening glide –*y*–) to the basic stem.

Table 2
Past Affirmative of reflexive–middle verbs

	Tunni ‘to get’	Dabarre ‘to die’	Maay ‘to know’	Karre ‘to seize’	NS ‘to seize’
1S	<i>qobáḍə ~ qobáḥə</i>	<i>qimiḍi</i>	<i>górodi</i>	<i>qabaḍə</i>	<i>qabtay</i>
2S	<i>qobáṣtə</i>	<i>qimiti</i>	<i>góroti</i>	<i>qabatə</i>	<i>qabatay</i>
3M	<i>qobíyi</i>	<i>qimiḍi</i>	<i>górodi</i>	<i>qabadə</i>	<i>qabtay</i>
3F	<i>qobáṣtə</i>	<i>qimiti</i>	<i>góroti</i>	<i>qabatə</i>	<i>qabatay</i>
1P	<i>qobánnə</i>	<i>qiminni</i>	<i>góronni</i>	<i>qabannə</i>	<i>qabannay</i>
2P	<i>qobətèen</i>	<i>qimitey</i>	<i>góroteey</i>	<i>qabateen</i>	<i>qabateen</i>
3P	<i>qobədèen</i>	<i>qimiḍey</i>	<i>górodeey</i>	<i>qabadeen</i>	<i>qabteen</i>

Sources: Dabarre: Lamberti (1980: 66)

Maay: Saeed (1982: 23)

Karre (Tuuf dialect): Tosco (1988: 91)

0.3.3. Progressive paradigms

Again isolated within the Southern Somali dialects is the T Progressive, built with the ending –*aay*, compared with the use of the C2 auxiliary *haa/hee* in Dabarre, Jiiddu, Maay and — probably borrowed from the latter — Karre.

Table 3
Progressive paradigms

	Tunni	Maay	Dabarre	Karre
1S	<i>keenà ay</i>	<i>šeena háayə</i>	<i>šeenow heešə</i>	<i>keenaal heeyay</i>
2S	<i>keenà ayt</i>	<i>šeena háaytə</i>	<i>šeenow heeštə</i>	<i>keenaal heesay</i>
3M	<i>keenà ay</i>	<i>šeena háayə</i>	<i>šeenow heešə</i>	<i>keenaal heeyay</i>
3F	<i>keenà ayt</i>	<i>šeena háaytə</i>	<i>šeenow heeštə</i>	<i>keenaal heesay</i>
1P	<i>keenà ayn</i>	<i>šeena háaynə</i>	<i>šeenow heešnə</i>	<i>keenaal heenay</i>
2P	<i>keenaaytèen</i>	<i>šeena háaytaay</i>	<i>šeenow heeštay</i>	<i>keenaal heesiin</i>
3P	<i>keenaayèen</i>	<i>šeena háayaay</i>	<i>šeenow heešay</i>	<i>keenaal heeyiin</i>

Sources: Maay: Saeed (1982: 24)

Dabarre: Lamberti (1980: 68)

Karre: Tosco (1988: 92)

The T progressive seems to be closer to the alternative synthetic construction of Maay *šeenooya*, *šeenooytə*, etc., which according to Saeed (1982: 25) is typical of the dialect of Bur Hakaba, and which in its turn has an alternative form with *-aa-* instead of *-oo-* (e.g., *šeenaáyaay* ‘they are bringing (it)’). The analytic paradigm is probably more recent, and T — alone among the Southern dialects in not having it — displays a certain conservativeness.

0.3.4. Adpositional particles

As discussed in Tosco (1993c), the system of the adpositional particles of T is closer to Maay than to Dabarre or Karre–Boni. In short, Tunni and Maay (as well as NS) have a four-adposition system, while only three markers are found in Dabarre and in the Boni–Karre group⁽⁶⁾:

Table 4
Adpositional particles in Somali dialects

Tunni	Maay	Dabarre	Karre	Boni	Jiiddu	Ashraaf	NS	gloss
<i>i</i>	<i>əŋ</i>	<i>iŋ</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>u</i>	‘to’
<i>ki</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>-h</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>ku</i>	‘to; with’
<i>ku</i>	<i>ku</i>				<i>ha</i>		<i>ka</i>	‘from’
<i>il</i>	<i>lə</i>	<i>lə</i>	<i>lə</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>il</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>la</i>	‘with’

Sources: Maay: Saeed (1982: 22);

Dabarre: Lamberti (1980: 81) and Gebert and Mansuur (1984);

Karre: Tosco (1989: 65);

Boni (Kilii dialect): Heine (1982: 67);

Jiiddle: Moreno (1951: 107) and Lamberti (1981: 85); Lamberti (1983a: 107) reports *is* instead of *u*.

Ashraaf (Mogadishu dialect): Ajello (1984) and Moreno (1953: 124);

The strongest element connecting T and Maay is the ablative value of *kú*, while T *í* goes back to a form similar to Maay *əŋ* and Dabarre *iy*: dropping of a historical nasal in word-final position is attested in T in other cases (e.g., the infinitives). The picture in T is well compatible with a picture of pervasive Maay influence, and no firm conclusions concerning classification are easily drawn, especially if one accepts Appleyard's (1990) hypothesis that the fourfold system of NS, Maay and T is secondary, while the threefold one of Karre–Boni and Dabarre (and beyond in Omo–Tana) reflects an older state of things.

0.3.5. Pronouns and possessive affixes

The following table shows the Independent Personal Pronouns of T in comparison with those of other Somali dialects:

Table 5
Independent Personal Pronouns

	Tunni	Maay	Dabarre	Jiiddle	Karre	Boni	NS
1S	<i>ána</i>	<i>anə</i>	<i>innə</i>	<i>ani</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>anə</i>	<i>ani-ga</i>
2S	<i>áda</i>	<i>adə</i>	<i>idə</i>	<i>að-a ~ -u</i> <i>~ -i</i>	<i>idi</i>	<i>ad[ə]</i>	<i>adi-ga</i>
3M	<i>úsu</i>	<i>usə</i>	<i>usə</i>	<i>ossə</i>	<i>usu</i>	<i>us[ə]</i>	<i>isa-ga</i>
3F	<i>íyi</i>	<i>iyə</i>	<i>isə</i>	<i>issə ~ ađii</i>	<i>iyi</i>	<i>iyi</i>	<i>iya-da</i>
1P	<i>únnu</i>	<i>unnə</i>	<i>uŋnə</i>	<i>unnə</i>	<i>unnu</i>	<i>ano</i>	<i>anna-ga</i> (excl.), <i>inna-ga</i> (incl.)
2P	<i>isín</i>	<i>isəŋ</i>	<i>isiŋ</i>	<i>essen</i>	<i>ada</i>	<i>ado</i>	<i>idin-ka</i>
3P	<i>íyo</i>	<i>iyə</i>	<i>isow</i>	<i>ussen</i>	<i>iyi</i>	<i>iyə</i>	<i>iya-ga</i>

Sources: Maay: Saeed (1982: 16);

Dabarre: Gebert and Mansuur (1984: 175); slightly different forms are given by Lamberti (1980: 49);

Jiiddle: Lamberti (1981: 49);

Karre: Tosco (1989: 42);

Boni (Kilii dialect): Heine (1982: 54).

On the whole, the T forms look very much Maay-like: T and Maay and the Boni-Karre group have failed to extend (as Dabarre and Jiiddle have done) the 3M ending *-s* to the 3F and 3P. Another conservative trait is the initial /*a*/ in the 1S and 2S, compared with the forms of Dabarre with initial /*i*/.

The following table shows the T possessive determiners in comparison with those of other Somali dialects:

Table 6
Possessive Determiners

	Tunni	Maay	Dabarre	Jiiddle	Karre	Boni	NS
1	-ə	-éy	-íí	-ə	-éy	-éè	-áy [-g/d-a]
2S	-á?	-áa	-áá	-w ~ -a	-áh	-áà ~ -aha	-áa [-g/d-a]
3M	-éy	-šéy ~ -šée	-és	-s	-íis	-í]sə ~ -í]sə	-íis [-a]
3F	-í	-šé[e]	-éé	-s	-éed	-eetə	-éed [-a]
1P	-áan	-áanə ~ -áynə	- ánnaw	-nə	-áan	-eenə	-ayá [-g/d-a] (excl.), -éen [-na] (incl.)
2P	-isín	-íinə ~ -íij	-íssij	-sin	-íin	-oqonə	-íin [-n-a]
3P	-iyó	-šóo	-šssow	-s	-óod	-ootə	-k/t-óod [-a]

Sources: Dabarre, Jiiddle and Maay: Banti (1984: 138–139); for Maay, the Masculine forms only are reported; note that in the third persons the gender marking has merged with the possessive;

Karre: Tosco (1989: 39);

Boni (Kilii dialect): Heine (1982: 51).

Of course, in order to ascertain the relative archaicity of the various systems a general comparative outlook onto the possessives of the Somali area (cf. Banti 1984) and beyond, in a pan-Cushitic approach (cf. Appleyard 1984) is unavoidable. The following few observations

are meant as a preliminary integration to these two works, in which, for lack of data, T was sadly omitted.

First, as in other dialects, little can be gained by the first person pronouns; but note that, */ay/ > /ə/ being a regular historical process in T, 1P –ə seems closer to Maay –éy than to Dabarre –ii. Second, the most important single piece of evidence linking T with Maay exclusively is the 3M form without final –s — a clear innovation (cf. Appleyard's 1984 attempted reconstruction of the Proto–Lowland East Cushitic possessives).

Finally, as elsewhere (cf. Banti 1984: 145 foll.), the 2P and 3P forms have clearly been remoulded upon the independent personal pronouns so that the resemblance between the 2P forms of T, Dabarre and Jiiddu has little historical value.

If anything, T seems therefore closer to Maay than to Dabarre and Jiiddu.

As anticipated, no definitive conclusion is easily drawn out of the preceding observations unless of a negative nature: little if anything seems to link T *exclusively* to the dialects of the other pastoral tribes of Southern Somalia. In conclusion, it seems safe to exclude T from whatsoever *genetic* grouping of dialects (areal connections being all another problem), at least at the present state of our knowledge (i.e., until workable descriptions of Dabarre and Jiiddu are available).

0.4. COLLECTION OF DATA AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The data upon which the present sketch is based was collected in Somalia, mainly in Mogadishu, during Summer 1987 and 1989, and was later checked in February–March 1990. The deterioration of the situation in the country and the extension of the civil war precluded any further collection and revision of the material. My main informant was Maxamed Cabdallah Muunye, of the *gamâas weriile*, a native of Xaramka ⁽⁷⁾, a town about 50 km. N of Jilib along the main route to Mogadishu. At the time of the interviews he was a worker at the National Printing Agency (*Madbacadda Qaranka*). In the very first stages of the research another valid informant was Mrs. Taahira Muunye, an elderly lady from Brava (Baraawe) and a resident of Mogadishu for many years.

I wish to express my thanks to: my informants for their help and endless patience; Pamela Mainardi, who corrected and improved the English of the original draft; and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Bonn–Bad Godesberg for a generous grant which made the publication of this book possible.

NOTES ON THE CHAPTER

- (1) Coordinates: 0 15 S, 42 36 E (Gorovaja 1982/1: 162).
- (2) Coordinates: 1 19 N, 44 10 E (Gorovaja 1982/2: 301).
- (3) Cf. the text n. 5, “Cattle-keeping” (Appendix I, Section II.C).
- (4) These names are given as, respectively, Dachtira, Daffaràt, Werìle, Goigàl, and Aggiùwa by Colucci (1924: 108).
- (5) Incidentally, */kt/* is the rule also in our T data. This is not the only case in which our data partially contradict Lamberti. E.g. in our material **/h + y/ → /h/* (as in NS, Jiiddu and Dabarre) and not, as per Lamberti, **/h + y/ → /y/* (which would put T alongside Karre, Maay and the Ashraaf dialects). We find, e.g. **ehèen** ‘they are’ and not ***eyeen** (Lamberti 1983a: 358).
- (6) Table 4 is adapted, with simplifications, from Tosco (1993c).
- (7) Coordinates: 0 37 N, 43 10 E (Gorovaja 1982/2: 239).

I. PHONOLOGY

I.1. SEGMENTAL PHONOLOGY

T has 41 phonemes: 20 consonantal and 21 vocalic — compared with 21 consonants and 20 vowels in NS (Cardona 1981). The unusually high number of vowels and especially the fact that these (barely) surpass the consonants are salient features of the system ⁽¹⁾. In I.1.2.1. an alternative analysis which could at least partially overcome this “typological oddity” is proposed.

I.1.1. Consonants

Twenty consonantal phonemes are used in T. The following chart presents their default articulation (i.e., when no allophonic phonological process apply):

Table 1
Consonantal phonemes of Tunni

b	l	d	a	p	p	p	v	u	g
i	a	e	l	o	a	a	e	v	l
l	b	n	v	s	l	l	l	u	o
a	i	t	e	t	a	a	a	l	t
b	o	a	o	a	t	t	r	a	t
i	d	l	l	l	o	a	s	r	a
a	e	s	a	v.	a	l		s	l
l	n		r		l	s			s
s	t.		s		v.				

STOPS

oral

voiceless

 t^h k^h

?

voiced

b d **d****g****g***nasal*

voiced

m \underline{n} $\underline{\eta}$ *implosive*

voiced

ɟ

AFFRICATES

voiced

ɟʒ

FRICATIVES

voiceless

f**s****ʃ****h**

TRILL

r

APPROXIMANTS

w**j**

lateral

l

I.1.1.1. Marginal consonants

The phonemic inventory of T is the same found in the other interriverine dialects (see Tosco 1989 for Karre, Lamberti 1980 for Dabarre and Lamberti 1983a for an overview of “Digil”).

The following consonants of NS are lacking in T:

/ʕ/ (voiced pharyngeal fricative; orthographic <c>)

/ħ/ (voiceless pharyngeal fricative; orthographic <x>)

/χ/ (voiceless velar fricative; orthographic <kh>); found in T only in loans from NS; e.g., *aχri-* ‘to read’, *aχwāan* ‘holy man, religious leader’.

In respect to NS, /f/ and /ɲ/ are added to the system of T as of other dialects of the area; their phonological weight is limited (cf. below I.1.2.1.).

I.1.2. Vowels

T has 21 vocalic phonemes — one more than NS: eleven short vowels and ten long ones. The system is based upon five phonological vowel qualities, each one of which can be either [± ATR] and either short or long, plus a central short vowel /ə/ to which neither [± ATR] nor length are relevant (cf. I.1.2.2. below for [± ATR] vowels):

Table 2
Short Vocalic phonemes of Tunni

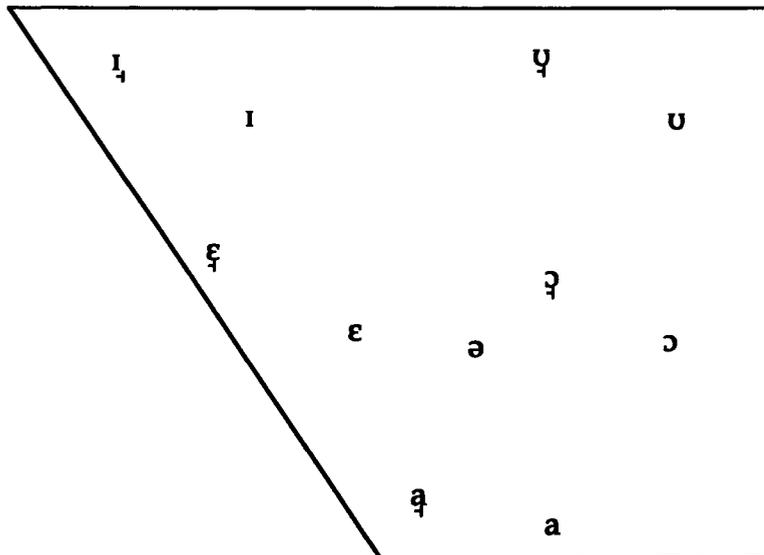
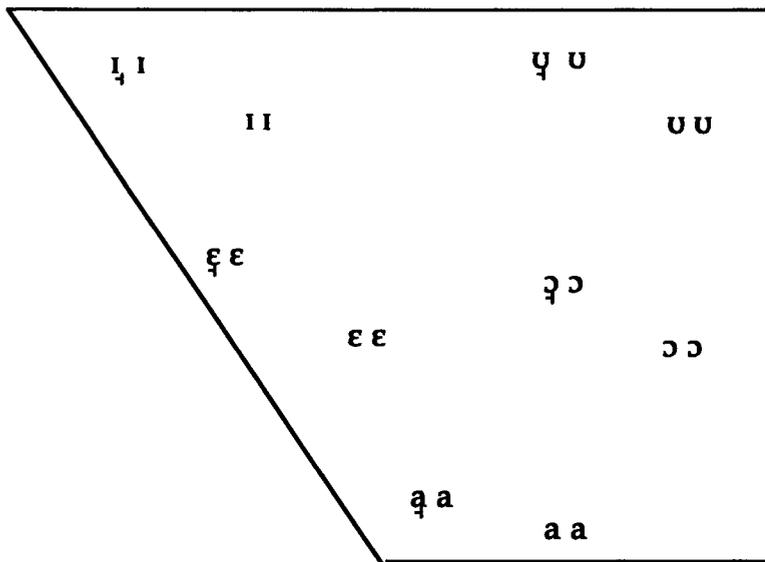


Table 3
Long Vocalic Phonemes of T



I.1.2.1. Length

Long and short vowels are clearly phonological in T as much as in all other varieties of Somali. Minimal pairs are found probably by hundreds and vocalic length must be taken into account both on comparative and historical grounds.

On the other hand, nothing seems to bar the possibility of analyzing the long vowels of T as a sequence of two identical segments. The phonetic realization of long vowels does not involve any noticeable tensing (such as experimentally demonstrated for NS by Farnetani 1981). According to this approach, both long vowels and geminate consonants would be sequences of two units. Such an analysis has actually been proposed for another Omo–Tana language, Arbore, by Hayward (1984: 54 foll.). But differently from Arbore, in T, as is usual in Somali, long vowels are *not* normally found at morpheme boundaries — and in this they are different from geminate consonants, which, as consonant clusters in general, arise at the junction of morphemes only. Therefore, an analysis of the T system as composed of 11 vowels (the five short ones, both [+ATR] and [–ATR], plus /ə/) would involve an unnecessary complication of the phonotactic rules and the syllable structure of the language (cf. below I.1.4.), and will not be pursued in the following.

I.1.2.2. [±ATR]

[±ATR] (Advanced Tongue Root) opposition among vowels — hitherto unknown in the Southern Somali dialects (with the notable exception of Boni) — has been found in T, but not studied systematically. One has the impression that most vowels in T are [–ATR], and that [+

ATR] is the marked member of the opposition. Moreover, the functional weight of the opposition is extremely low (being exploited only lexically and apparently not, as in NS, morphologically too).

In the examples below, the same series of I.P.A. signs is used for both [+ ATR] and [- ATR] vowels, with the subscript [̱] (under the first mora only on long vowels) marking [+ ATR]. Obviously, [+ ATR] vocoids have a generally more fronted realization than their [- ATR] counterparts — as instrumentally shown for NS by Farnetani (1981). Our transcriptional choice stresses the fact that [± ATR] only is responsible for the phonemicity of the two series. Moreover, [+ ATR] vowels do not have the fronted quality of I.P.A. [i̱, e̱, œ̱, ɯ̱, ʏ̱] (2).

Minimal pairs have been found in very few cases and on long vowels only (3):

[+ ATR]		[- ATR]	
<i>wèel</i> ([w̱ɛ̱ɛl])	‘calves; sons’	vs. <i>wèel</i> ([wèɛl])	‘vessel’
<i>bood-</i> ([ḇo̱od-])	‘to jump’	<i>bòod</i> ([bòod])	‘fence’
<i>duul-</i> ([ḏu̱ul-])	‘to attack’	<i>duul-</i> ([duul-])	‘to fly’

(the last opposition is found in NS too; T *wèel* ‘calves; sons’ corresponds to NS *weyl*; T *bood-* ‘to jump’ is [+ ATR] in NS too).

Other cases of [+ ATR] vowels — generally corresponding to NS ones — are:

gèed ‘tree’ ([g̱ɛ̱ɛd], not *[gèɛd]; *idem* in NS)

vs.

šeen- ‘to bring’ ([ʃ̱ɛ̱ɛn-], not *[ʃɛɛn-]; cf. NS *keen-* [kɛɛn-])

and:

nuug- ‘to suck’ ([ṉu̱ug-], not *[nuug-])

vs.

duug- ‘to bury’ ([ḏu̱ug-] not *[duug-])

diid- ‘to forbid’ ([ḏi̱id-], not *[diid-]; *idem* in NS)

guur- ‘to move away’ ([g̱u̱ur-], not *[guur-]; *idem* in NS)

but:

foog- ([f̱o̱og]) ([- ATR]) vs. NS *joog-* ([ḏɔ̱og]) ([+ ATR]) ‘to stay’

The [± ATR] opposition is assumed as phonological for all the vocalic phonemes of T for which the short–long opposition holds true (i.e., all except /ə/); following an established tradition in Somali studies and the Somali national orthography it will be left unmarked; the [+ ATR] member only of minimal [± ATR] couples will be marked in the glossary.

I.1.2.3. The status of [ə]

As in other dialects of the area, many instances of a centralized vocalic phone [ə] are found in T. The question of its phonemic status has baffled the scholars (cf. Saeed 1982: for Maay and Tosco 1989 for Karre). In his monograph on Dabarre, Lamberti (1980: 26) describes /ə/ as follows: ‘es ist ein Murmelvokal, scheint weitgehend in unbetonter Silbe vorzukommen und mehrere Vokalqualitäten darzustellen. Da die letzte Silbe im Dab. meistens unbetont ist, tritt ə, das vielleicht derselbe, von Tiling (1922: 31) durch ě bezeichnete Laut ist, besonders im Auslaut, auf alle Fälle nie im Anlaut auf’. Similar words are used for /ə/ in Jiiddu (Lamberti 1981: 32).

The same positional constraints seem to apply in T, where [ə] is found mainly in word-final position, and, occasionally, word-internally, but never word-initially.

On the other hand, it is not true that [ə] is limited to unstressed syllables: as Saeed (1982: 7) has shown for Maay, [ə] can occur with H-tone; the same holds in T and it is an obvious argument against a reductionist analysis of [ə], for which it would be an allophone of a “full” vowel; cf.:

agaarənə ‘it is green’

Saeed further notes that /ə/ is unique among the short vowels in not having a long correspondent and in being more subject to assimilatory processes than the other short vowels. We can now add that /ə/ is also exceptional insofar as the [±ATR] tract is irrelevant to it (cf. above, I.1.2.2.).

Summing up, one can say that Lamberti stresses the (diachronic?) derivation of /ə/ from other short vowels, while Saeed points to the synchronic instability of /ə/ and its aptness to assimilation. Both positions are right: in fact, it seems possible for T to derive *most* occurrences of [ə] to the operation of a general process of short vowel neutralization (see below), while, on the other hand, phonological /ə/ is often assimilated to an adjacent vowel. The problem will be, therefore, to disentangle phonemic from allophonic occurrences of [ə], the latter being the product of various phonological processes (I.1.4.3.). In general, it can be said that phonological /ə/ never occurs in word-initial position, nor, generally, word-internally (except in morphologically stated environments) — being thus mostly limited to word-final position, where also most occurrences of phonetic [ə] are found.

I.1.3. Phonetic description and orthographic conventions

The phonetic realization of the phonemes in contexts where they are not subject to phonological processes and the orthographic conventions used are shown below:

Table 4
Phonetic description and orthographic conventions

I.P.A.	Phonetic Description	Orthography
[t ^h]	voiceless aspirated dental stop	<i>t</i>
[k ^h]	voiceless aspirated velar stop	<i>k</i>
[ʔ]	voiceless glottal stop	<i>ʔ</i>
[b]	voiced bilabial stop	<i>b</i>
[d]	voiced dental stop	<i>d</i>
[ɖ]	voiced postalveolar stop	<i>ɖ</i>
[g]	voiced velar stop	<i>g</i>
[ɟ]	voiced dental stop	<i>ɟ</i>
[m]	voiced bilabial nasal stop	<i>m</i>
[ɳ]	voiced dental nasal stop	<i>n</i>
[ɲ]	voiced palatal nasal stop	<i>ɲ</i>
[ɟ̚]	voiced palatal implosive stop	<i>ɟ̚</i>
[d͡ʒ]	voiced palato–alveolar affricate	<i>j</i>
[f]	voiceless labiodental fricative	<i>f</i>
[s]	voiceless alveolar (sibilant) fricative	<i>s</i>
[ʃ]	voiceless palato–alveolar (sibilant) fricative	<i>ʃ</i>
[h]	voiceless glottal fricative	<i>h</i>
[r]	voiced alveolar trill	<i>r</i>
[w]	voiced labiovelar approximant	<i>w</i>
[y]	voiced palatal approximant	<i>y</i>
[l]	voiced alveolar lateral approximant	<i>l</i>
[ɪ]	lowered close front unrounded vocoid	<i>i</i>
[j]	close front unrounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>i</i>
[ɪ̃]	long lowered close front unrounded vocoid	<i>ii</i>
[j̃]	long close front unrounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>ii</i>
[ɛ]	open–mid front unrounded vocoid	<i>e</i>
[ɛ̃]	open–mid front unrounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>e</i>
[ɛ̃̃]	long open–mid front unrounded vocoid	<i>ee</i>
[ɛ̃̃̃]	long open–mid front unrounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>ee</i>
[ə]	mid central unrounded vocoid	<i>ə</i>
[a]	open central unrounded vowel	<i>a</i>
[ã]	open central unrounded vowel with advanced tongue root	<i>a</i>
[aa]	long open central unrounded vocoid	<i>aa</i>

<i>[a̠a]</i>	long open central unrounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>aa</i>
<i>[o]</i>	open–mid back rounded vocoid	<i>o</i>
<i>[q]</i>	open–mid back rounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>o</i>
<i>[oo]</i>	long open–mid back rounded vocoid	<i>oo</i>
<i>[qo]</i>	long open–mid back rounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>oo</i>
<i>[u]</i>	lowered close back rounded vocoid	<i>u</i>
<i>[y]</i>	close back rounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>u</i>
<i>[uv]</i>	long lowered close back rounded vocoid	<i>uu</i>
<i>[yuv]</i>	long close back rounded vocoid with advanced tongue root	<i>uu</i>

I.1.4. Phonotactics

The following generalizations hold true for monomorphemic as well as polymorphemic words:

- no word begins or ends with more than one consonant — i.e., consonant clusters may only occur intervocally;
- consonant clusters are limited to two consonants;
- vowel–clusters are not allowed.

Clusters are generally limited to polymorphemic words, but the morphemic segmentation is often uncertain, and many words with clusters are synchronically better treated as monomorphemic. Apart from clusters arising out of morphological reduplication and word–compounding, the second member of clusters is generally one of the consonants occurring in affix–initial position, of which the most common are:

- k* (masculine gender marker in nouns)
- t* (feminine gender marker and plural marker in nouns ; 2 and 3F person marker in verbs)
- n* (1P marker in verbs)
- s* (causative affix in verbs)

I.1.4.1. Positional restrictions

All segments can occur word–initially; the following have not been found word–finally:

<i>/t/</i>	<i>/ɲ/</i>
<i>/k/</i>	<i>/ʃ/</i>
<i>/g/</i>	<i>/j/</i>
<i>/d/</i>	<i>/h/</i>

Other phonemes are of rare occurrence — either word–initially (*/ʃ, ɲ/*), word–finally (*/ʃ, h, w, y/*), or are limited to NS loans (*/q/* in final position).

/ʔ/ is found word-initially (vocalic onsets being avoided; cf. I.1.4.2.); word-finally it is either phonemic or an allophone of **/h/** (cf. I.1.4.3., Glottal Neutralization, PP 9.). Word-internally it is restricted to probable loans from NS (e.g., **laʔáan** ‘to be without’) and some “cultural words” (e.g., **dóʔo** ‘blessing’).

Table 5 displays, with examples, the positional occurrences of the consonant phonemes word-initially and finally:

Table 5
Positional restrictions of consonantal phonemes

	#		#
/t/	tír ‘central pole’	—	
/k/	kaláaš ‘kidney’	—	
/ʔ/	áf ‘mouth; language’	—	
/b/	badán ‘many’	déb ‘fire’	
/d/	dúb ‘tail’	gód ‘hole’	
/q/	dég ‘ear’	—	
/g/	gèed ‘tree’	hubùug ‘maize-cob’	
/q/	qéred ‘ladle’	(rare, only in loans from NS) bliq ‘coward’	
/m/	mín ‘house’	*láam ‘branch’ (→ lán , PP 12.)	
/n/	nán ‘man’	háan ‘kind of big container’	
/ɲ/	(rare) ɲignígle ‘chick’	—	
/ʃ/	(rare) šáb ‘break (it)!’	—	
/j/	jéer ‘hippopotamus’	—	
/f/	fúr ‘open (it)!’	áf ‘mouth; language’	
/s/	sabéen ‘ewe lamb’	gòos ‘molar tooth’	
/š/	šiid ‘stone’	(rare) kaláaš ‘kidney’	
/h/	háar ‘excrement’	*déh ‘say (it)!’ (→ déʔ , PP 9.)	
/r/	ròob ‘rain’	hír ‘close (it)!’	
/w/	wán ‘milk’	(rare) tarráw ‘liver’	
/y/	yahàas ‘crocodile’	(rare) kóoy ‘come ! (S)’	
/l/	lán ‘branch’	íl ‘eye’	

Vowels have fewer positional restrictions than consonants; only **/ə/** is severely limited (cf. I.1.2.3.); on the whole, both **/u/** and **/uu/** are rare — the latter never occurs word-finally.

I.1.4.2. Syllabic structure

The following formula defines all syllable types admissible in T:

C V (V/C)

Vowels cannot be syllabic onsets in T. Word-initially, they are preceded by /ʔ/, which, being fully automatic, is not indicated in our transcription (nor in the Somali orthography).

The syllable types V, VV, VC and VVC are therefore excluded (the exemplified syllable is underlined):

<i>á.gar</i>	= /ʔ <u>á.gar</u> / (CV)	‘see (it)’
<i>aá.do</i>	= /ʔ <u>áa.do</u> / (CVV)	‘tradition’
<i>áf</i>	= /ʔ <u>áf</u> / (CVC)	‘mouth’
<i>ées</i>	= /ʔ <u>èes</u> / (CVVC)	‘grass’

The four admissible syllable types are further illustrated below:

CV	<i>dóo.ro</i>	‘chicken’
CVV	<i>síi.yi</i>	‘he gave (it)’
CVC	<i>bíl</i>	‘moon; month’
CVVC	<i>šlid</i>	‘stone’

I.1.4.3. Phonological Processes

Our presentation of phonotactics follows a Natural Phonology framework, roughly along the lines of Stampe (1973) and following works. Central to this approach is the distinction between rules and processes. The latter are fully automatic, exceptionless changes, which are inherent to the language and apply whenever their structural description is met. Rules, on the other hand, are changes which are either lexically or morphologically conditioned.

Under the heading of Phonological Processes (PP.s) not only fully phonological changes — i.e. those which change the phonological status of a unit or a group of units — are listed, but also allophonic processes, which account for the realizations of the phonemes different from the default ones stated in the above sections.

A list of Morphological Rules (MPR.s) is given below in I.1.4.4.

Notwithstanding this Natural approach, in the following sections both PP.s and MPR.s are formalized in a manner reminiscent of the phonological rules of generative phonology. Processes are numbered for ease of reference only, without any implication of extrinsic ordering.

The transcription adhered to derives from the theoretical approach assumed in the description of the phonology. In general, the transcription is broadly phonemic, except when the realization of a phoneme or a string of phonemes is affected by one or more phonological processes; in this case, square brackets are employed and reference to the relevant process is provided with a phonemic transcription between slashes added, where applicable.

List of PP.s:

a. affecting vowels:

- PP 1. LONG VOWEL SHORTENING
- PP 2. SHORT VOWEL CENTRALIZATION
- PP 3. VOWEL HARMONY
- PP 4. [ə]-DROPPING
- PP 5. GLIDE INSERTION

b. affecting consonants:

- PP 6. FINAL DEVOICING
- PP 7. UVULAR FRICATIVIZATION
- PP 8. LABIAL FRICATIVIZATION
- PP 9. GLOTTAL NEUTRALIZATION
- PP 10. GLOTTAL ASSIMILATION
- PP 11. GLOTTAL DELETION
- PP 12. NASAL NEUTRALIZATION
- PP 13. NASAL ASSIMILATION
- PP 14. ASSIMILATION TO NASAL
- PP 15. WORD-FINAL DEGEMINATION
- PP 16. VOICE ASSIMILATION
- PP 17. DENTAL DEGEMINATION

PP 1. LONG VOWEL SHORTENING

This and the following process could perhaps be collapsed into a single rule of vowel shortening. PP 1. states that in word-final position long vowels are shortened by one mora:

$V: \rightarrow V / ___ \#$

Example:

$/ii/ \rightarrow [i] / ___ \#$

as in:

dobódí # 'the (aforementioned) jackal' (/dobódíi/; cf. *dobódiina*
'and the jackal')

As /uu/ is never found word-finally, PP 1. applies vacuously to it.

The output of PP 1. is generally not shown in the transcription, which therefore gives final phonological long vowels for phonetic short ones. In a few cases, the output of PP 1. is shown

by putting the second mora of the long vowel in square brackets, which is actually lost in the process (e.g., *dobódí[i]*).

PP 2. SHORT VOWEL CENTRALIZATION

In word-final position short unstressed vowels are neutralized to [ə]:

V → ə / ____ #

PP 2. accounts for most occurrences of non-phonological [ə]s:

a. /i/ → [ə] / ____ #

as in:

moròod[ə] # 'elephant' (/moròodi/)

b. /e/ → [ə] / ____ #

as in:

írr[ə] # 'ewe' (/írre/; cf. *irrédíitə* 'my ewe')

c. /a/ → [ə] / ____ #

as in:

dùurk[ə] # 'the bush' (/dùurka/; this accounts, *inter alia*, for the frequent reduction to [ə] of the article -a)

d. /o/ → [ə] / ____ #

as in:

móor[ə] # 'cattle-pen' (/móoro/; cf. *mooróda* 'the cattle-pen')

Again, as /u/ is not found word-finally, PP 2. applies vacuously to it. An exception could be *múl[u]*, which is analyzed as the result of the application of PP 3. to phonological *múlə*.

The output of PP 2. is shown in square brackets in the transcription.

PP 3. VOWEL HARMONY

By this process any short vowel can have its quality completely or partially assimilated to that of another vowel in a more prominent syllable nearby — prominence being a function of the muscular effort devoted by the speaker to its articulation (cf. Laver 1994: 450).

The process can operate both perseveratively (forwards along the chain of speech), and anticipatorily (backwards). Especially in this latter application, Vowel Harmony and the next process of [ə]-Dropping account for the instability of /ə/ (cf. above, I.1.2.3.), which is thus viewed as part of a more general process of feature copying — whereby the distance between nearby vocoids is reduced and ease of articulation enhanced. The application of this process is — as very often assimilatory processes are — in dependance on the speed and style of speech: it is common in more rapid/casual styles, sporadic in more lento/formal styles.

The process states that any short vowel is (under the conditions stated above) assimilated to the nearest H-toned vowel:

$$[v] \rightarrow V_{\alpha} / \{ \acute{v}_{\alpha} X _ , _ X \acute{v}_{\alpha} \}$$

The assimilation of a short vowel to a following H-toned vowel can be exemplified by:
q[ə]biil ‘tribe’ (**/qabiil/**)

The following cases exemplify the very common assimilation of /ə/ to a preceding H-toned vowel:

a. /ə/ → [u]

as in:

má ún[u] ‘I/he do(/es)n’t eat (it)’ (**/únə/**)

b. /ə/ → [o]

as in:

má qób[o] ‘I/he do(/es)n’t get (it)’ (**/qóbə/**)

c. /ə/ → [a]

as in:

má kás[a] ‘I/he do(/es)n’t know (it)’ (**/kásə/**)

d. /ə/ → [e]

as in:

má šéen[e] ‘I/he do(/es)n’t bring (it)’ **/šéenə/**

e. /ə/ → [i]

as in:

má diid[i] ‘I/he do(es)n’t refuse (it)’ (**/diidə/**)

Assimilation to a following H-toned vowel:

/ə/ → [i]

as in:

máy s[i] í gúurt[u]

‘why are you moving away?’ (**s[i]** = **sə**; **gúurt[u]** = **gúurtə** from PP 2.)

/ə/ → [u]

as in:

máy s[u] kú obs[e]téey

‘what she feared was...’ (**s[u]** = **sə**; **obs[e]t-** = **obsət-**)

Vowel Harmony and Short Vowel Centralization (PP 2.) therefore make conflicting demands: while the former assimilates any short vowel (including /ə/) to a more prominent vowel nearby, the latter reduces a “full” vowel to a centralized [ə]. As a result of these conflicting scopes, in word-final position (where phonological /ə/s are found) any short vowel can thus be the result of the application of Vowel Harmony to a phonological /ə/, while, conversely, any [ə] can be the result of the reduction of a full, short unstressed vowel (as per PP 2.). The problem can be solved only by looking at the behaviour of the same morphemes both syntagmatically — e.g., in non-final position — and paradigmatically. That the final vowel of **móor[ə]** ‘cattle-pen’ is phonologically **móoro**, not **móorə**, is thus apparent from the articulated form **mooróda** ‘the cattle-pen’. That a verbal form such as **gúurt[u]** ‘you/she move/s away’ is phonologically **gúurtə** is conversely evidenced by the morphologically correspondent forms **kás[a]**, **séen[e]**, **díid[i]**, etc.

The output of PP 3. is not always shown in the transcription; when it is, it is put in square brackets.

PP 4. [ə]-DROPPING

Depending on the style and speed of the utterance, /ə/ is optionally dropped before pause (i.e., in utterance-final position: ##). Being a process, [ə]-dropping applies whenever the conditions triggering its application are met.

[ə] → (opt.) Ø / __ ##

Examples of application of the rule to phonological /ə/s are:

síit ## ‘you/she gave (it)’ (**/síitə/**)

a yóont ## ‘don’t shout!’ (**/yóontə/**)