

SOMALI TEXTBOOK

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PREFACE

This course is designed to bring you to a **LEVEL 3 PROFICIENCY** in Somali grammar and Somali-English translation capabilities according to standards set by the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) or ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable).

As much practice as possible in working on genuine textual material is included. For example, starting with Chapter 21, and each chapter thereafter, you will be dealing with thirty Somali folktales which give insight into numerous aspects of both Somali grammar and cultural outlook.

This textbook was designed on the basis of **FREQUENCY COUNTS** done on both the **lexical** and **grammatical** material contained in the folktales and pedagogical works like the *Somali Newspaper Reader* and *Somali Common Expressions*, supplemented by other articles in or on the language. The ordering of the fifty chapters was generally dictated by the highest frequency forms. For example, classifiers (like **baa** [FOCUS] and **waa** [DECLARATIVE]), the definite articles (**-ka** and **-ta**), or the use of the PAST TENSE all occurred hundreds of times and are crucial to the understanding of Somali texts. These are put very early (in chapters 2 through 8). However, the principle of **PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION** also played a decisive role in course design, i.e., building upon easier or earlier material. Thus, IMPERATIVE VERBS are not very common in Somali texts, but they are the basis of finding or learning a VERB ROOT, upon which all the tenses are built. Hence, these are treated earlier (in Chapter 7), prior to the introduction of the PAST TENSE (Chapter 8). Conversely, NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES may be easy to learn, but they are taken relatively late (in Chapter 28) because they are not so common. Similarly, verbs of Group One (Chapters 8-9) are far more frequent than those of Group Two (Chapter 11), Group Three (Chapter 15), or Group Four (Chapters 35-38). Although some forms of the verb *to be* are very frequent and important (Chapter 14), others are not so (and are delayed until Chapter 42).

The authors wish to thank Jack D. Murphy for his many helpful comments and suggestions and his encouragement along the way.

NOTES TO THE STUDENT

As was mentioned in the Preface, you will be learning a lot of GRAMMAR sufficient to cope with most prose and media material you might encounter in the Somali language. [Somali poetry is a different and more complex matter, but is usually well above the level 3 at which this text is aimed.] You can always look up words in a dictionary, but grammar forms the backbone of any language and it is imperative to come to grips with it. For this reason, a comprehensive GRAMMATICAL INDEX has been included for you to cross-reference patterns and structures.

If you desire ORAL FLUENCY in Somali, Appendix 3 contains numerous survival dialogs to help you. Additionally, selections from *Somali Common Expressions* can be used in conjunction with this textbook to insure that you can cope with most everyday situations as they arise.

Vocabulary is also introduced at a modest pace; usually 50, but never more than 100 words per lesson. Although there is a GLOSSARY at the end of the book to help you with words you have encountered, but may have forgotten, we strongly recommend that you develop FLASHCARDS to assist you in memorizing and coping with the volume of lexicon you will ultimately be acquiring (approximately 2,000 words). If you write the Somali on one side and the English on the other, these will serve as important tools for memorization. You may wish to include the page numbers on which the forms are found, so that you can reference them when necessary. In this way, you will be developing your own comprehensive index to this course.

All new material is introduced (in **patterns**) and drilled (in **exercises**) in "bite-sized bits." Chapters are kept short (ten pages on average) and you should work through each with your teacher or Somali language speaker at a pace that makes you feel comfortable. Some reviews have been included in this book (such as, chapters 12, 40, 44, and 50), but in general you and your teacher should work together in negotiating a review schedule. Some prefer (or need) such work every five or six chapters, others every ten or twelve. As much as possible, work with your teacher to devise additional exercises, games, crossword puzzles, transformation drills, or homework when you feel that you need more practice to grasp the structure(s) under discussion.

NOTES TO THE TEACHER

This course aims to give the student an intuitive understanding of the Somali language. That is to say, students are not encouraged to be analytical in their thinking and learning; but those who are of that inclination should not be discouraged from asking questions.

Each chapter has the following areas for study:

Dialog or introductory pattern

Grammatical explanation (cross-referenced to **SRG** = *Somali Reference Grammar* by Saeed)

Cultural notes (where appropriate)

Drill(s)

Free conversation or Transformation drill

Memorization guidelines

Dictation or Transcription exercises

Translation practice or Folktale reading (starting onwards from Chapter 21)

Review material

For each part of the lesson (dialog, drill, or exercise), these three procedures should be followed:

- (1) Have the students cover up any English translation (on the right side of the page). They should only be *looking at the Somali* during the **first presentation**. Make them repeat each sentence (or phrase) after you.
- (2) Have them close the book or cover the page for the **second presentation**. At this stage, they should be *listening to the Somali*, picking up not only the vocabulary, but the pitch contours. Make them repeat each sentence (or phrase) after you. Stop to correct each mistake, and repeat the sentence (up to three times, if necessary).
- (3) For the **third presentation**, repeat the Somali and discuss the English meanings. Wherever possible, give an absolutely literal translation of the Somali, and then the more idiomatic (or appropriate) English rendition. Most of the glosses in this book follow a very literal translation of the Somali to adhere to its own particular flow.

CONCORDANCE OF THIS COURSE
with the *Somali Newspaper Reader*

It is recommended that the student be exposed to as much Somali textual material as possible. For this reason, apart from the folktales introduced starting from Chapter 21, students should work with newspaper articles. If you have the *Somali Newspaper Reader* (1984 edition) available, the following sequence of the first forty-four selections will assist in reinforcing the grammatical points of each lesson.

CHAPTER	READING	IDENTIFY THESE CONSTRUCTIONS
23	R02	Use of isagoo and SUBJECT VERB
24	R03	Use of la + ma NEGATIVE
25	R32	Use of lahaa + -eyn
26	R38	Use of PAST PROGRESSIVE -ayey
27	R27	Use of aan RELATIVE NEGATIVE
28	---	[No NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE]
29	R15	PLURALS warar , dalal
29	R20	PLURALS saraakiil , lahayayaal
30	R09	ADJ CONSTRUCTIONS, e.g., -san , ugu
30	R21	ADJ- an + tahay ; use of badan
31	R13	Use of la'aan
31	R22	Use of leeyahay
32	R10	Use of sidaasi and sidii
32	R40	Use of si ... u constructions
33	R33	Various TIME WORDS
33	R44	Wide use of TIME WORDS
34	R16	OPTATIVE -tee (= -to + ee)
34	R34	OPTATIVE use of ha
35	R25	Use of yimaada
35	R23	Use of yimid
36	R05	Use of yiraahdaa
36	R17	Use of yiri
37	R11	LOCATIVES, e.g., hoos , taalla
37	R19	Use of yaalla and taalla
38	R01	Use of ogeysii <i>inform</i> as a noun
38	R18	Use of yaqaanaa

CONCORDANCE with *Somali Newspaper Reader*

CHAPTER	READING	RELEVANT NOTES
39	R28	DERIVATION mar / mari
39	R43	VERBS with -i and -ee
40	R06	Use of hase yeeshee
40	R24	Use of CONJUNCTIONS, e.g., -ba ; review DERIVATION hambalyo/-yee
41	R29	PREPOSITION FUSION, e.g., loola
42	R26	Other forms of <i>to be</i> , e.g., aayeen
42	R36	Use of ahaato
43	R12	SHORT PRONOUN iya
44	R08	Use of NEGATIVE in iyadoon
44	R42	Identify NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS
45	---	[No POTENTIALS or sow / show]
46	R07	Use of furriin
47	R35	Use of -asho , -nimo , -tinnimo
47	R04	Use of -darro
47	R39	Use of -id , -asho , -nimo , -tin
48	R37	Use of COMPOUND WORDS
48	R41	Use of several COMPOUND WORDS
49	R14	IDIOMS carrabka ku adkee <i>emphasize</i> , is hor taag <i>oppose</i> , shaaca ka qaad <i>reveal</i>
50	R31	Various SOUND CHANGES
50	R30	Various SOUND CHANGES

Readings 45 through 51 may be taken after the course is completed.

ABBREVIATIONS

HERE	MEANING	IN DICTIONARY
\$	suffix	
adj	adjective	adj.
adv	adverb or adverbial expression	adv.
alt:	an alternate or variant of	
atr	attributive [adjective]	
aux	auxiliary or helping verb	
class	classifier [e.g., baa , ma , sow]	
cmp	compound	
col	collective [noun]	n.coll.
cond	conditional [<i>would have</i>]	
deic	deictic (or demonstrative)	demons.
der	derived [adjective]	
det	determiner or article [e.g., ka , kan , tan , kaas]	
excl	exclusive pronoun [does not include <i>you</i>]	
expr	expression	
-f	feminine noun or verb	
fem	feminine	
fig.	figurative usage	
foc	focus	focus word
fus	fusion	
fut	future	
idm	idiom, idiomatic expression	
imp	imperative	
inch	inchoative verb [<i>becoming X</i>]	
incl	inclusive pronoun [includes <i>you</i>]	
inf	infinitive [of a verb]	
intj	interjection	interj.
intr	intransitive [verb]	
lit:	literally means	
loc	locative or place name	
-m	masculine noun or verb	
masc	masculine	
mass	mass [noun]	
n	noun	n.
n0	noun that usually has no plural	
n1-7	nouns of the first through seventh declensions	

n8	noun of the eighth declension [irregular plural]
name	personal name
neg	negative
np	noun phrase

num	number or numeral	numer.
opp:	opposite (antonym) is	
opt	optative [verb form expressing a wish or desire]	
ord	ordinal [number or numeral]	
past	simple past [tense]	
phab	past habitual	
pl	plural	
poss	possessive	poss.suff.
ppgr	past progressive	
prep	preposition	
pres	present [tense]	
prhb	present habitual	
pro	pronoun	pron.
prog	progressive verb form	
prpg	present progressive	
qw	question word or interrogative	
red	reduced form	
rel	relative form of the verb	
rw:	the root word is	
sg	singular	
s.o.	someone, a person	
st	stative verb	
s.t.	something, a thing	
subj	subject case or verb agreement	
suf	suffix	suff.
syn:	synonym (word with the same meaning)	
time	time word or temporal expression	
tr	transitive [verb]	
VH	vowel harmony	
VL	vowel loss	
vn	verbal noun or gerund	
vpro	verbal pronoun	
v1=	first conjugation verb root	v.
v2a=	second conjugation verb root (ends in -i)	
v2b=	second conjugation verb root (ends in -ee)	
v3a=	third conjugation verb root (that ends in -o)	
v3b=	third conjugation verb root [with vowel loss]	
v4a	fourth conjugation yiri 'say'	v.irreg.
v4b	fourth conjugation yimi 'come'	
v4c	fourth conjugation yiil 'be in a place'	

v4d	fourth conjugation yiqiin `to know'
v5a	fifth conjugation yahay `be'
v5b	fifth conjugation leeyahay `have'

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PERSONAL NOTES

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