Multilingual Somalia: Ploy or Pragmatic

Mohamed Haji Mukthar

Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, born in 1947 in Somalia, who earned his Ph.D. from al-Azhar University in Cairo, is currently professor of history and Arabic at the Savannah State University in Savannah, Georgia. He has written widely on the history of Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and the Muslim experience in the USA.

Somali people speak a number of languages and dialects, Maay[1] and Mahaa[2] being the lingua franca of the majority. None of the Somali languages and dialects was written until late 1972, due to disagreements based on clan-related scripts or religious and political issues that dictated whether these Somali languages should be written in an Arabic- or a Latin-based alphabet.

In 1972, however, a Latin-based Mahaa script was adopted, and Mahaa became the only official national language of the country. This experiment alienated speakers of other Somali languages, especially Maay speakers who, in 1976, formed a literary association called Af-Yaal,"the language keepers" whose main concern was the protection and revival of Maay culture and language. By 1980, many of the members of Af-Yaal were jailed, harassed and killed by the Barre military administration forcing some into exile. It was the expatriate Af-Yaal that developed mostly new Maay scripts. Since 1994, one of those scripts Alif-Maay, the Maay Alphabet, has been circulated in Somali academic circles and found most suitable.[3]

This essay will discuss Alif-Maay, focusing on the historical background of languages and dialects of Somalia. Furthermore, the essay will explore and attempt to recover literature from the Maay heritage previously excluded for political reasons from the Somali literary canon.

Historical Background

The Somali languages and dialects belong to the Eastern Cushitic sub-branch of the Afroasiatic family, they are related to languages such as the Saho-Afar spoken in the northeastern part of the Horn, Galla-Sidamo in southwestern Ethiopia and Omo-Tana in northeastern Kenya. Historical linguists have tentatively subdivided Somali languages and dialects into more than 20 groups. The northern Somali people speak what is generally referred to as Af-Mahaa with dialectical variants. From the central regions to the south, Af-Maay is the dominant language, though there are other languages and dialects, who, however, use Af-Maay as a lingua franca. In business and religion, there are a large number of Arabic loan-words.[4] Since none of the Somali languages had a script, Arabic, English and Italian remained official languages in the former Somali Democratic Republic until 1972 when a modified Roman script was adopted for Af-Mahaa. Technical language is largely formed after Italian and English models.

Arabic Models

In the 13th century, Barkadle Yusuf[5] adapted Arabic script for the transcription of Somali vowels to facilitate the teaching of the Qur'an in the duksi[6]. In the late 19th century, Sheikh Ibdille Issak (1796-1869)[7] and Sheikh Ahmad Gabyow (1844-1933)[8] made poetic and mnemonic translations from the Qur'an and the Hadith, but these translations were not written down until recently. Sheikh Uways Ibn Muhammad al-Barawi (1846-1907)[9] used Arabic script, when he printed his Af-Barawaani, Af-Maay and Af-Tunni qasa'id (poems). In 1938, Sheikh Muhammad Abdi Makahiil published an essay in the Issaq dialect using Arabic script. In the 1960s, both Ibrahim Hashi Mohamud (1929-1971) and Sa'id Usman Guleed promoted the use of the Arabic script.[10] However, Arabic models were not considered because Arabic vowels do not correspond to the vowels in Somali languages, and other Arabic characters had to be modified. Most importantly, Arabic lost ground, as it did not have the characteristics of an indigenous script.

Indigenous Models

In the late 1920s, Isman Yusuf Keenadiid, a Majerteen of the Darood clan developed a unique script known as Ismaniyya which, however, could be used only for the Af-Mahaa spoken in the northeast and, largely, in the central region. In 1933, Sheikh Abdirahman Sheikh Nuur Abdillahi (1900-1990) introduced another unique script known as the Gadabursi script. In the late 1940s, Mustaf Sheikh Hassan (1927-1983) of Hariin sub-clan of the Reewin devised a script to be used by those who spoke Af-Maay and related dialects known as the Kontonbarkadliyya ("Blessed Fifty"). In 1952, Hussein Sheikh Kadare of the Abgaal sub-clan of the Hawiye introduced the Kadariyya script. Although their own clans accepted these scripts, other clans would not. Kontonbarkadliyya and Kadariyya were neglected because neither the Abgaal nor the Reewin played significant roles in post-independent Somalia.

Colonial Models

Christian missionaries developed Latin-based scripts. In 1897, Evangeliste de Larajasse and Cyprien de Sampont wrote a Practical Grammar of the Somali Language, which used a Latin orthography for Af-Mahaa. J. W. C. Kirk, in the British protectorate (1902-1904), recorded the Somali he heard and which he taught using a Latin script of his own invention, using some features of Arabic script. In 1905, Kirk published a grammar for the Yibir and Midgan dialects. Latin-based orthographies were examined by the Italian orientalist, Enrico Cerulli, and the linguists, Martino Moreno and Mario Maino in major publications.[11] During the trusteeship period (1950-1960), Italy brought the issue to the first Territorial Council (TC), which unanimously adopted Arabic as the official language of the country.[12] Radio Mogadishu, however, conducted broadcasts in both Af-Maay and Af-Mahaa until 1959 when the transitional government of the trust territory adopted a resolution limiting broadcasts only in Af-Mahaa. Thus, Somalia gained independence and unification in July 1, 1960 without a unified script for its languages.

Post-Independent Efforts

The first civilian administration (1960-1964) set up a national language commission in October, 1960 to "investigate the best way of writing Somali, considering all the aspects of the language[s], with special eye on the technical side, and submit a report to the government by March, 1961" and to agree on one script suitable for all Somali languages. The commission was composed of nine members, most of whom with linguistic credentials, and who had invented their own scripts. Special consideration was also given to the representation of the different Somali languages and dialects. The commission found that the basic sounds of Somali languages were 44; thus, the future orthography should be represented accordingly.[13] The commission clearly stipulated in its report that the Upper Jubba "dialects," otherwise known as Af-Maay, had two or more phonemes unknown to other Somalis to be incorporated in the final script.[14] Among the guiding principles of the commission was that the future national orthography must respond to 17 questions, namely, among others: Is the script simple in its lettering? Is it unique[ly Somali]? Is it phonetic? Are any "printing machines," i.e. typewriters and presses available? Is it economically and technically viable? Has it any intrusive and anomalous diacritics? Has it any signs with more than one function?[15] It is important to bear in mind that the commission's concern was to agree on a script or orthography suitable for all Somali languages and dialects together.

The commission reviewed eighteen scripts, eleven indigenous, devised in unique Somali forms; four based on Arabic characters and three based on Latin characters. The Af-Maay script submitted by Mustaf Sheikh Hassan had 42 characters and was ranked the second of the eleven locally devised orthographies. The Arabic based scripts though acceptable for religious use did not meet the major requirements sketched out above. The Latin based scripts did satisfy most of these requirements, but as they were associated with colonialism and Christianity, their adoption was unlikely: Laatiin wa-laa Diin, "Latin is without God".

Political and religious factors complicated the deliberations and led three significant members to resign in protest because their scripts, Ismaniyya and Arabic respectively, did not meet the agreed upon criteria. Another important member, Mustaf Sheikh Hassan, a district commissioner and the only Af-Mayy speaker

and an advocate of an Af-Mayy script, was transferred from Mogadishu to Bal'ad and could not contribute to the work of the commission. Nevertheless, the commission could not come to a consensus, and the government decreed that Arabic, English and Italian remain official languages.

During the second civilian administration (1964-67), the government invited a committee of three foreign experts sponsored by UNESCO. The experts arrived in Mogadishu in March, 1966 to a city shaken with demonstrations hostile to the adoption of a Latin script. The UNESCO Committee reviewed existing scripts and interviewed most of their devisers. Although they could not come up with a specific recommendation, they were critical of indigenous and Arabic scripts and had few objections to Latin based scripts.[16]

In October 1969, the coup d'état led by Mohamed Siad Barre established a military administration, the Somali Revolutionary Council (SRC), which, in 1971, appointed the Guddiga Af-Somaliga, the Somali Language Commission without, however, specific instructions to recommend a script. The choice of a script would be political, and, indeed, on 21 October 1972, on the third anniversary of the coup, a helicopter dropped multicolor leaflets in a new Latin script over the parade passing before the tribuna of leaders and dignitaries. From that day on, this script became official, though few could read it. Af-Mayy speakers, and speakers of other Somali languages, soon discovered that the script was only suitable for Af-Mahaa speakers, but all criticism was repressed in the name of cultural homogeneity and monolingualism. Thus, it was through the adoption of this script that one form of Somali, Af-Mahaa, became the only officially acceptable national language.

Introducing a New Script

By 1974 a major literacy campaign was launched to teach nomadic Somalia, particularly the non-Mahaa speakers, how to read and write in the official form of Somali, Af-Mahaa. The ensuing literacy drive involved a national mobilization. Schools and colleges all over the nation were closed and some 25'000, almost the entire student population, were sent into the nomadic areas as teachers. To their astonishment, the Af-Maay speakers in the former Upper Jubba, Lower Jubba and Banadir regions (where the campaign was concentrated) were told that Af-Mahaa was their mother tongue Afkiina hooyo. The motto of the campaign was sithi 'anaha qurquriya: "Drink it; it is smooth like milk": the Af-Maay choked. Nevertheless, Af-Mahaa became the language of instruction in all schools and the language of media and press.

The Af-Maay speaking regions were overwhelmed with schools, but students were denied the right to speak Af-Maay their true mother tongue in the school environs. First graders were anxious to go to pretty schools with playgrounds full of kids but were disturbed when they were told not to speak their mother tongue, Af-Maay. If they did, they were sent to the principal's office and spanked. Eventually, they dropped out of school or played truant. The result for the Af-Maay community was illiteracy and economic misery. A significant number of students tried to assimilate and "mother tongued" in Af-Mahaa as soon as possible. But still, they were called Eelay wiiq, "the devil Eelay" every day. They pretended they did not hear and suppressed their feelings and make all kinds of excuses and did not fight back. After they graduated and became "mother tongued," they became outcasts. Many young men accepted their imposed identity and even married non-Reewin wives, giving their children non-Af-Maay names. Many of them could no longer make sense in Af-Maay, not even to their relatives. They lowered themselves and humiliated their children when they forced them to speak Af-Mahaa only.

This was also true in meetings and public speeches. Speakers were reminded to always speak Af-Somali, meaning Af-Mahaa: Warya! Af-Somali ku hadal ('Hey! Speak Somali'). Siad Barre announced that civil servants had to learn the new script in three months. Before the coup, Af-Maay speakers had their own political parties and cultural associations and MPs in the National Assembly deliberated in Af-Maay which was then translated and transmitted through headphones as in the meetings of the United Nations. Indeed, debates and speeches in the parliament were in Arabic, Italian, English and local Somali languages. Before Af-Mahaa became Af-Somali, all students studied and were taught in Arabic, Italian and English. Ironically, learning and being taught in Af-Mahaa disadvantaged speakers of not only Af-Maay but all other Somali languages. It is evident that, before Af-Mahaa became the language

of instruction, Af-Maay speakers excelled because of their knowledge of writing and reading Arabic from the duksi Qur'anic schools, which was not usually the case for Af-Mahaa speakers. Af-Maay students had to study suugaanta Somalida, Somali literature, a course that dealt with poetry, story telling and cultural matters, but which excluded their own literature that was not even translated. The Af-Mahaa children's stories were not like the familiar stories they heard from their mothers, Gekogeko. "Once upon a time," nor were the riddles Diilley, the ones they knew by heart. They did not memorize their own Reegay classical poetry. This suppression and official eradication of Af-Maay culture and literature was a major bone of contention and a cause of disenchantment and disunity under Siad Barre's regime. It also contributed to the demise of the Somali state itself.

When the military regime was overthrown in January 1991, the assertion of homogeneity came under attack. The Inter-Riverine Studies Association (ISA)[17] emerged in 1993, and, at its first congress, adopted a new, Latin-based script for Af-Maay called Alif-Maay, "Maay alphabet."[18]

Cultural Renaissance

From independence to the fall of Siad Barre (1960-1991), the agro-pastoral Reewin who spoke Af-Maay were outside the traditional political system. Their language and culture were considered inferior. Little attention was given to the history and traditions of non-pastoral communities. However, the collapse of the state might well have been a blessing in disguise for agro-pastoral communities in the Riverine Region as well as elsewhere in the country. In 1991, the Fannaaniinta Arlaadi, an alliance of artists to preserve the Maay heritage of music, drama and poetry, was founded in Baidoa. Many of its members had been active since 1959 when Radio Mogadishu dropped Af-Maay programs in favor of Af-Mahaa. Previously, members of that alliance served in the civilian and military regimes as educators, civil servants, or soldiers. At the collapse of the Barre regime, in 1991, and the man-made famine and violence of the clan militias in the Inter-Riverine region, some poets began to speak out. A music teacher, Abdulkadir Ali Hassan, wrote a poem called Ay Tiringney Maghaagheng, Isly tiirineeng, "Let us save our name, and hold onto it proudly" to restore Maay pride. It was adopted as the signature tune of Radio Baidoa, the first broadcast voice of Af-Maay, and the national anthem of the Riverine State founded in 1995.[19] The soldier Issak Nuuroow Eeding, a Reewin known by an Abgal name, Issak Abgaalow, wrote Mawqif Mujaahid, "The way of the warrior," and Isla Goroneeng, "Let us agree," poems which mobilized young men and women to defend their culture. Radio Baidoa broadcast Maay folk music, poetry, plays, and stories and, thus, served as a catalyst for Maay cultural revival. Indeed, Radio Baidoa was the first ever to broadcast and produce programs exclusively in Af-Maay.

Since 1992, the group Fannaaniinta Arlaadi has been producing a newsletter named, Arlaadi, "Homeland", irregularly published in Baidoa. They also produce videos of songs and plays. Moreover, they revived the publication and study of Af-Maay classical literature: Gopy, "poetry," Weeryr or Bayting, "war songs," Dheel, "dances," Adar, an oral Maay poetic genre dealing with animals, especially with camels, Naby Ammaang, and Dikri "religious poetry." They revived Gekogeko stories, sometimes set to music, and Diilleey riddles. In this context, a particularly old poem in Af-Maay regained popularity. Shoofin is a poem chanted by Kutaab, "Qur'anic school students," at the closing of a day session, a school anthem in the duksi tradition. Composed by the millenarian Sheikh Ibdille Issak (1796-1869)[20] in Af-Maay, the poem is chanted "to keep the devils at bay" – such is the meaning of the title. It has an epic sweep from Creation to the Day of Judgment and lays out fundamental spiritual and moral values.

The Recognition of Af-Maay as Official Language

No decision is made in Somali affairs without the consideration of clan politics. The adoption of a modified Latin script for Af-Mahaa is a good example of clan intrigue. This script was created, modified, and propagated by Shire Jama Ahmed, member of Marehaan clan, in 1960. The Majerteen, the ruling clan of the time looked down on the Marehaan as reer baadiye, "Bedouins," and supported, under the guise of political correctness, the Ismaniyya script invented and propagated by Yassin Isman, a Majerteen. The Marehaan script was set aside as the Majerteen dominated Somali post-independence politics. The first Prime Minister, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke (1960-64),

as well as the second one, Abdirizak Haji Hussein (1964-67), were Majerteen. Shermarke, who became the second President (1967-69), was assassinated only days before Barre's coup. As Barre was a Marehaan, it was not surprising that he should make Marehaan, a modified Latin script accommodating all Af-Mahaa speakers, the official national script.

Maay intellectuals have, since the mid-1970s, denounced the linguistic and cultural "genocide" of the Barre regime. The activities of the Af-Yaal, the language keepers, were celebrated in Mustaf Sheikhs's poems such as Sheleedeya "sidelined (1973) and Sahal Ma'llin Isse's Huburow "beloved" (1974), and Dooyow (1976).[21] My own Master's thesis (1973)[22] and Ph.D. dissertation (1983)[23] as well as my major published works[24] generated greater awareness about the plight of Af-Maay speakers.

Substantial changes also occurred in Somali Studies after the collapse of the Barre regime. Scholarship of the period, though focusing on the causes of the collapse of the Somali state and possible solutions, reported the social injustices suffered by the Af-Maay speaking people. Ali Jimale, The Invention of Somalia, demonstrated that the widely accepted history of Somalia was a political myth. Catherine Bestmen and Lee Cassanelli's collection of essays on the socio-economic causes of the civil war[25] provide ample evidence on what went wrong in Somalia and how Af-Maay speaking people were culturally and economically humiliated. Significant sociological studies include Virginia Luling's outstanding work on the Geledi Sultanate[26]; the late Bernhard Helander on the Hubeer clan[27], and the anthropological study of the population and land use in inter-riverine Somalia by Ioan Lewis[28]. However, both civilian and military Somali governments discouraged foreign scholars from studying non-Af-Mahaa speaking regions. Indeed, they were harassed and denied visas.

Various studies expose the myth of Somalia's monolingualism: Marcello Lamberti[29] and John Saeed[30] explore linguistic and dialectical variations in Somalia. In 1998, Salim Alio Ibro contributed a Dictionary of the Jiddu language, and, in 2007, Mohamed H. Mukhtar and Omar M. Ahmed published the first English-Maay Dictionary exploring the roots of Af-Maay and its relationship to the other Somali languages and dialects.

The marginalization of agro-pastoral societies and their culture has been addressed by their representatives in the Somali national reconciliation conferences since the collapse of the state. Many of these Af-Maay defenders were assassinated or were blackmailed to such an extent that their lives were hardly bearable. However, the struggle continued. Truth eventually prevailed when the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference of 2003 at Mbegathi, Kenya, acknowledged that Af-Maay would be another official language of the Somali Republic. The Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic of 2003 stated in Article 7: "The official language of the Somali Republic shall be Somali (Maay and Mahaatiri [Af-Mahaa])".

Conclusion

In many religious traditions, the spoken word has creative power, but that word need not be confined to one language; thus, a diversity of languages and cultures is valued. In the Qur'an, the variety of linguistic expression among groups and individuals is seen as one sign of Allah's creative omnipotence: wa-min âyâtihi khalqu s-samâwâti wal ardi wa-khtilafu alsinatikum wa-alwânikum inna fî dhâlika la-âyatin lil-'âlamîn, "And among his signs is the creation of heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors; verily in that are signs for those who know" (Qur'an 30:22). Islam encourages multilingualism: man ta'allama lughata qawmin amina min makrihim "He who learns other people's language is safe from their mischief" (Hadith). Some cultures praise silence in given circumstances, as the wide-spread saying goes, "Speaking is silver; to be silent is gold." Others do not put an explicit emphasis on the role of language. But most place a high value on "speaking well": "knowing how to speak" was, and is, a sign of wisdom and high social status. Those in high places cultivate many forms of verbal and rhetorical art. Commonly, language and self-reflection – "I am what I say" – are seen as what makes people human, and identification with one's own native languages defines individual and group identity.

Somali society, like other oral societies, places a heavy weight on speaking well. To tell a person to speak proper Somali, "Af-Somali ku hadal" – an expression used by Af-Mahaa speakers to humiliate and degrade speakers of other Somali languages –indicates the degree of exclusion of (for example) Af-Maay speakers, particularly after Af-Mahaa had been politically endorsed by the government under Siad Barre. Consequently, many non af-Mahaa languages and dialects have either disappeared in recent decades or are at grave risk of extinction. Hostile governments actively suppress some; as larger languages spoken by politically more dominant groups replace others. Unless action is taken to support and foster linguistic diversity, many languages and dialects will cease to be spoken.

Somali scholarship so far has failed to note that the imposition of monolingualism on a multi-linguistic people is a form of cultural and social oppression that contributed to the disunity of Somalia, which again paved a way for the continued collapse of the Somali state. The ethnocentric civilian and military regimes decreed that multi-culturalism, or the expression of multi-cultural issues, was treason. Now that Somali society is in disarray with no central authority, it is necessary to re-evaluate the diversity of Somali culture. Perhaps, at last, the arrogance and single-mindedness of monolingual empire builders will be condemned and cast aside, making space for a new and truly egalitarian Somali polity.

[1]Also known as Af-Maay, Af-Reewin, Maaymaay or Maayteri ("What did you say")? The language of Somalis south of the Shabelle Valley in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions, Upper and Lower Juba regions, Northeastern Kenya and Southwestern Ethiopia and most of the Banadir. The Mahaa speakers, except for the urbanized and itinerant populations, do not understand Maay. Maay has no pharyngeal sounds, but there are nasals, fricatives and plosives.

[2]Commonly known as Af-Mahaa, or Af-Somali. The official language of the former Somali Democratic Republic since 1972. It is spoken widely in the central and northeastern and pockets of the Riverine Regions. Unlike Af-Maay, this language lacks nasal sounds and has distinctive pharyngeal phonemes.

[3]Abdullahi Haji Hassan, (Aw Soomow), et al. "Draft Outline of the Maay Alphabet: Alif-Maay." Paper presented to the First Inter-Riverine Studies Association Congress, Toronto, Canada, 4-5 November 1994.

[4]Andrzej Zaborski, "Arabic Loan-Words in Somali: Preliminary Survey" Folia Orientalia 8, (1967), 125-175.

[5]A saint remembered for his system rendering Arabic vowel sounds into Af-Maay Somali vowel ones. See Mukhtar, Mohamed Haji, Historical Dictionary of Somalia, New Edition. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003. pp 54-55.

[6]Qur'anic schools similar to the madrasah or kuttaab schools in Islamic Arabia.

[7]A millenarian and catechismal poet and an erudite Islamic scholar proficient in Arabic and Maay languages. Sheikh Ibdille developed a teaching technique to explain and translate the shari'a laws from Arabic to Af-Maay. See Mukhtar, Historical Dictionary, ibid. pp 136-37, 211-12, 22-23.

[8]A poet-Sheikh who composed many Masaffo "catechism poems" ranging from the hanuunin "inspirational" to digniin "admonitory." In the early days of Italian colonial rule, Sheikh Ahmed Gabyow composed patriotic poems defending country and faith. See Mukhtar, Historical Dictionary, ibid. pp 204-05.

[9]The reviver of the Qadiriyya order and the founder of the Uwaysiyya branch. In addition to his sufi mystic powers, Sheikh Uways was a multi-lingual poet. He composed religious poems and addressed congregations in Tunni, his mother tongue, Arabic, Maay, Mahaa, and Chimbalazi.

[10]See Ibrahim Hashi Mohamud, al-Sumaliyyah bi-Lughat al-Qur'an: Muhawalah Wataniyyah li-Kitaabat Lughat al-Um. "Somali in the language of the Qur'an: patriotic attempt to write the mother tongue." Cairo: Dar al-Tiba'ah al-Hadithah, 1963, and Sa'id Usman Guleed, Alfaz Arabiyyah fi al-Lughah al-Sumaliyyah: Bahth Maydaani. (Arabic words in the Somali language: A field study). Both scholars advocated official adoption of Arabic script.

[11]See Cerulli, Enrico. Somalia Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti. 3 volumes, Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1957, 1959, 1964; Moreno, Martino. Il Somalo della Somalia: Grammatica e Testi del Benadir, Darood e Dighil. Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1955; and Maino, Mario. La Lingua Somala Strumento di Insegnamento Professionale. Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1953.

[12]The council adopted its resolution on February 2, 1951. See "Copia del verbale di Riunione No. 8 Del 2 Febbraio 1951" in Somaliya: Antologia Storico-Culturale. Occasional Journal of the Cultural department of the Ministry of Education. (June, 1969), 47-50.

[13]Ibid. 22

[14]Ibid. 22.

[15]For further details see Report, ibid. 11-12.

[16]B.W.Andrzejewski, S. Strelcyn and J. Tubiana, "Somalia: The Writing of Somali," UNESCO, Paris, August 1966. (ws/0866.90 (CLT)).

[17]This association founded on 5 December 1993 in Worchester, Massachusetts, is committed to the re-examination of socio-cultural assumptions in Somali studies. It held its first Congress at the University of Toronto, Canada on 4 November 1994, and publishes Demenedung, a quarterly newsletter.

[18]Mohamed H. Mukhtar, "Alif-Maay: Ploy or Pragmatic?" Demenedung, Newsletter of the Inter-Riverine Studies Association, vol. 1. No. 4 (1997), 5-6. This bicameral council known as the Digil-Mirifle Supreme Governing Council (DMSGC) was created in March 1995 as an interim legislative body of an autonomous Reewin State. It had two houses; the House of Representative presided first by Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, then by Dr. Hassan Ibrahim known as Hassey, and the House of Elders, called the Supreme Traditional Council of Chiefs (STCC) chaired by Malak Mukhtar Malak Hassan. However, the council's life was cut short on September 17, 1995 after the invasion of Baidoa by the warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, leader of Somali National Alliance (SNA). Further details, see Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, "The Plight of the Agro-Pastoral Society of Somalia ," Review of African Political Economy, no. 70 (1996), 552-553.

[19]See note 7

[20]Sahal Ma'allin Isse graduated from the '11 January High School' in Baidoa in 1974. Already during his school years he wrote and composed poems in Af-Maay. He then joined the Somali National Security (NSS). In between 1973-1976 he completed Huburow series that dealt with mixture of love stories and patriotic songs. The military regime accused him of being Ka'aandiid "traitor and anti-revolution". He then deserted the NSS and sneaked to Yemen as political assylee. In late 1980s, he moved to Cairo, Egypt. He got seriously ill in the early 1990s and brought to London, UK for medical assistance where he currently lives.

[21]Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, "Tarikh al-Ist'mar al-Itali fi al-Sumal Hatta 1908," (The History of Italian Colonialism in Somalia Until 1908), M.A. Thesis, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, 1973.

[22]Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, "Al-Sumal al-Itali fi Fatrat al-Wisayah Hatta al-Istiqlal 1950-1960," (Italian Somaliland from trusteeship to independence 1950-1960). Ph.D. dissertation, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, 1983.

[23]"The Emergence and Role of Political Parties in the Inter-River Region of Somalia from 1947-1960 (Independence)". Ufahamu 17, no. 2 (Spring 1989), 75-95. "Islam in Somali History Fact and Fiction," In The Invention of Somalia, edited by Ali Jimale Ahmed, 1-27. (Lawerenceville,N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1995).

[24]"The Plight of Agro-Pastoral Society of Somalia," Review of African Political Economy, no. 70 (1996), 543-553. Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, and Omar Moalim Ahmed, English-Maay Dictionary, (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd., 2007).

[25]Catherine Bestmen and Lee Cassanelli (ed.), The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War Behind the War, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

[26]Virginia Luling, Somali Sultanate: The Geledi City-State Over 150 Years, (London: HAAN, 2002).

[27]Bernhard Helander, "The Hubeer in the Land of Plenty: Land, Labor, and Vulnerability among a Southern Somali Clan," In The Struggle for Land, Ibid. 47-69.

[28]Ioan Lewis, Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali Afar and Saho, New Edition, (London: HAAN, 1994).

[29]Marcello Lamberti, Somali Dialects, Ibid.

[30]John I. Saeed, "Dialectical Variation in Somali," In Proceedings of the First International Congress of Somali Studies, edited by Hussein Adam and Charles Geshekter, 464-91, (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992).