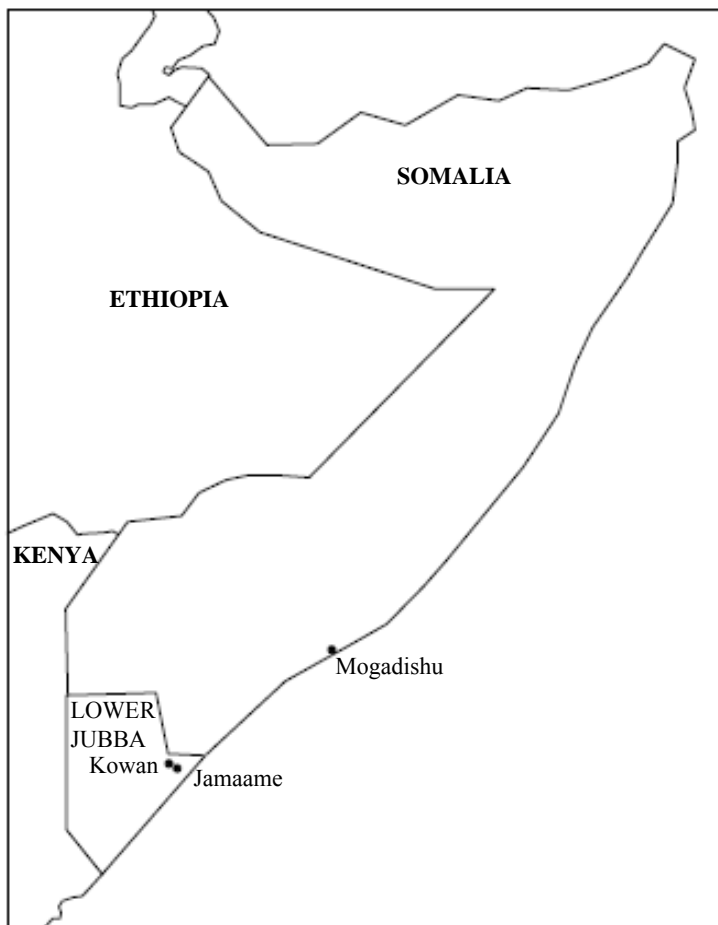# Notes on Lower Jubba Maay

Jade Comfort and Mary Paster
Leiden University and Pomona College

1. Introduction

Maay is a Cushitic language of Somalia. It has not yet been established whether Maay is a Somali dialect or a separate language, but Saeed (2006: 548) reports that the two are mutually unintelligible, and in this paper we point out significant differences between Maay and the Somali dialects described in the literature (Hyman 1981; Saeed 1982, 1987, 1999, 2006). In this paper we describe the Lower Jubba Maay dialect (LJM; see also Paster 2007). Our consultant is a 27 year-old (2006) male from Kowan, Lower Jubba (Fig. 1). LJM is his native language and he uses it regularly at home.

Figure 1: Map of Somalia

2. Phonology
2.1. Phonemic inventory

The consonantal inventory of LJM is shown in (1).

(1)

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Alveo-Palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Implosive			ɗ		ʼy	ɠ	
Plosive	(p) b		t d			k g	ʔ
Affricate				ǰ			
Fricative	f [β]	[ð]	s	š		[ɣ]	h
Nasal	m		n		ñ	[ŋ]	
Liquid			l r				
Glide	w				y		

The implosive consonants [ɗ] and [ɠ] in LJM correspond to [ɖ] and [q] in Standard and Central Somali, which lack implosives. On this basis, we speculate that LJM [ʼy] may correspond to Somali [ɟ], but no cognates have been established to verify this. Geminates are documented in Standard and Central Somali, but they are not found in LJM due to a rule of Geminate Reduction to be discussed in §2.3.5.

The vowel inventory of LJM is shown in (2).

(2) a. **Phonetic vowel inventory**

	Front	Central	Back
High	i:		u:
	ɪ		ʊ
Mid	e:		o:
	ɛ		ɔ
		ə	
Low		a:	

b. **Phonemic vowel inventory**

	Front	Central	Back
High	i(:)		u(:)
Mid	e(:)		o(:)
Low		a(:)	

As indicated above, vowel length is distinctive in LJM. As in Central Somali (CS) and Standard Somali (SS) (Saeed 1982, 1987), the short vowels are more central/mid than the long vowels. This is why the long and short variants of each vowel are represented using different symbols in the phonetic vowel inventory in (2a). For the remainder of the paper, we will transcribe vowel quality using the phonemic inventory in (2b). It should be pointed out that LJM apparently has no vowel harmony process; cf. SS (Saeed 1987: 19, Armstrong 1934).

2.2. Tone/accent

The Somali dialects that have been described in the literature have contrastive tone or accent (see Hyman 1981, Saeed 1982, 1987, 2006, Armstrong 1934), but no distinctive tone or accent is found in LJM. In this language, stress is root-final. In CS, which seems to be the Somali dialect that is most similar to Maay, tone is contrastive on noun roots. Most noun roots in CS have final high (H) tone, but some disyllabic roots have initial H tone. As shown in (3), both of these CS tone patterns correspond to final stress in LJM (H tone in CS is represented by an acute accent, while stress in the LJM examples is indicated by underlining the vowel of the stressed syllable).

(3)

	CS	**LJM**	**Gloss**
a.	osbá	usb<u>o</u>	'salt'
	boodá	bood<u>o</u>	'thigh' (CS) / 'heel' (LJM)
	ɗilmaañá	ɗilmaañ<u>o</u>	'mosquito'
b.	fárow	far<u>o</u>	'zebra'
	ókun	ok<u>u</u>ŋ	'egg'
	éyduur	<u>ee</u>y duur<u>e</u>t	'wild dog'

CS also contrasts H vs. low (L) tone on monosyllables, but there is no such contrast in LJM (L tone in CS examples is represented by the lack of an acute accent over the vowel). For example, tone can distinguish masculine nouns from feminine nouns in CS. As shown in the examples in (4), there exist pairs of animal names in CS where the masculine noun has a H tone and its feminine counterpart has L tone. The other, non-paired nouns in (4) are representative examples, meaning that CS masculine nouns such as *róob* have H tone, while CS feminine nouns such as *lug* have L tone. As seen below, this contrast is neutralized in the LJM cognates. In LJM, the difference between, e.g., 'male dog' and 'female dog' is established via gender agreement on verbs and noun suffixes, since the nouns themselves are pronounced identically in isolation.

(4) a. **CS**   **LJM**   **Gloss**   b. **CS**   **LJM**   **Gloss**
        éey   e̲e̲y   'male dog'   eey   e̲e̲y   'female dog'
        wéel   we̲l   'male calf'   weel   we̲l   'female calf'
        móos   mo̲o̲s   'banana' (masc.)   ǰeer   ǰe̲e̲r   'hippo' (fem.)
        róob   ro̲o̲p   'rain' (masc.)   lug   lu̲k   'leg' (fem.)

Some dialects of Somali use tone to indicate case, another function of tone that is absent in LJM. For example, in the sentences in (5) from CS (Saeed 1982), the identity of the subject vs. the object is distinguished based on the location of the H tone on the 3sg masculine pronoun /usə/: initial H tone indicates that 'he' is the subject, while final H tone indicates that 'he' is the object. In LJM, there is no such distinction; the 3sg masculine pronoun is always pronounced with final stress. This renders LJM sentences such as *usu dili* ambiguous as to whether 'he' is the subject or the object, as shown below.

(5) a. **CS**   b. **LJM**
        úsə díli   'he killed it'   us̲u̲ di̲li   'he killed it' ~ 'it killed him'
        usə́ díli   'it killed him'

One might expect LJM to have a more rigid word order than CS in order to compensate for the lack of tonal case marking. Interestingly, however, word order is quite flexible in LJM and does not definitively establish subject vs. object. This can be seen in the LJM sentences below, which are both ambiguous in their meaning.[1]

(6) a. ii   yahas   aan-t-i   b. yahas   ii   aan-t-i
        3sgf   crocodile eat-Fem-Past   crocodile 3sgf   eat-Fem-Past
        'she ate a crocodile'   'she ate a crocodile'
        ~ 'a crocodile ate her'   ~ 'a crocodile ate her'

CS also has distinctive tone patterns to indicate verb tenses/aspects (Saeed 1982: 10, 24-26); these are absent in LJM, as seen in the examples in (7).

(7) **CS**   **LJM**   **Gloss**
     šéen-i   še̲e̲n-i   'I brought' (simple past)
     šeen-ə ǰér-i   še̲e̲n ǰir-i   'I used to bring'
     šeen-óoy-ə   še̲e̲n-oy-e   'I am bringing'
     šeen-é   še̲e̲n-e   'I am about to bring'
     šeen-ə dóon-ə   še̲e̲n do̲ñ-ya   'I will bring'
     šeen   še̲e̲n   'bring!'
     šeen-ə́   še̲e̲n-a   'bring! pl.'

---

[1] Our consultant does exhibit a preference for putting the subject before the object; for example, when asked for the sentence 'she ate a crocodile,' he is likely to produce *ii yahas aanti* first. However, *yahas ii aanti* is also accepted with this meaning, and the consultant insists that there is no meaning difference between the two versions of the sentence. An anonymous reviewer suggests that this could be a focus difference; this is possible, but we have found no evidence for it in our elicitation sessions.

2.3. Major phonological processes
2.3.1. Nasal Place Assimilation

The first phonological rule to be discussed is Nasal Place Assimilation (NPA), where a nasal assimilates to the place of articulation of a following consonant. NPA applies within words, and contexts for its application are created via affixation (8a) or compounding (8b). In (8), the pre-consonantal context shows the application of NPA, while the pre-vocalic context shows the underlying form.[2] One surface exception to NPA (to be explained in §2.3.6) is that nasals before *n* surface as *ŋ*.

(8)   **Pre-consonantal context**   **Pre-vocalic context**

a.	ereñ-yal	'goats'	erem-o	'goats'
	aan-ti	'she ate'	aam-i	'he ate'
	ɗan-ti	'she drank'	ani ina-ɗam-aw	'I might drink'
	miniŋ-ki	'the house'	minim-o	'houses'
b.	okun šalal	'egg and tomato dish'	okum-o	'eggs'
	inaŋ gewer	'baby girl'	inam-o	'babies'
	ereŋ gondolo	'sheep'	erem-o	'goats'

2.3.2. Final Nasal Velarization

A second rule, Final Nasal Velarization (FNV), changes any nasal to *ŋ* in word-final position.[3] Examples of FNV are shown in (9). The same rule is also attested in CS (Saeed 1982: 5).

(9)	a.	sum-o	'poisons'	suŋ	'poison'
		bilam-o	'women'	bilaŋ	'woman'
		naarǰim-o	'coconuts'	naarǰiŋ	'coconut'
		saham-o	'food trays'	sahaŋ	'food tray'
	b.	buubun-o	'snails'	buubuŋ	'snail'
		bin-o	'pins'	biŋ	'pin'
		baloon-o	'balls'	balooŋ	'ball'

The examples in (10) show that the locus of FNV application is indeed word-final position, not utterance-final position. The words in bold are words that do undergo the rule but would not have undergone it if the context for application were utterance-final position.

(10)   niŋ-ki   **inaŋ**   ili   ɗeɗeel-oy-e
           man-det   baby   with   play-pres.prog-3sgm.pres.prog
           'the man is playing with a baby/child' (cf. *inam-o* 'babies')

      ereŋ   eey-ki   ɗini-'ye   roor-oy-e
      goat   dog-det   side-3sg   run-pres.prog-3sgm.pres.prog
      'a goat is running beside/behind the dog' (cf. *erem-o* 'goats')

      balooŋ   inaŋ-ki   dariša-ði   ka   'yeβ-i
      ball   baby-det   window-det   inst.   break-3sgm.past
      'the baby/child broke the window with a ball' (cf. *baloon-o* 'balls')

---

[2] The reader will notice that all nasals undergoing assimilation in these examples are [m] pre-vocalically. One may therefore wonder whether the nasals are not underlyingly /m/ as we claim; perhaps instead they are underlyingly /ŋ/ and a rule changes nasals to [m] pre-vocalically. It is true that the majority of nasal-final nouns end in /m/, but there are exceptions as in (9b), showing that there is not a general rule changing nasals to [m] pre-vocalically. Paster (2007: 81-82) presents a possible explanation for the high percentage of /m/ among final nasals in nouns.

[3] A small number of exceptions to FNV have been found; all of them are borrowed words (e.g., *kareem* 'shaving cream', *ɗalafilin* 'television', *broon* 'brown').

2.3.3. Coronal Fusion

A third phonological process that applies in LJM is Coronal Fusion. By this process, sequences of /l + t/ surface as [l]. This can be compared with similar processes in Somali dialects; for example, in CS, underlying /l+t/ surfaces as [ll] (Saeed 1982: 5). In SS, underlying /l+t/ surfaces as [š], though only when the /t/ belongs to an inflectional suffix (Saeed 1987: 24).

Some examples showing the application of Coronal Fusion in LJM are given in (11). The examples in (11a) demonstrate the underlying forms of three suffixes that attach to feminine noun roots, and the examples in (11b) show that when the same suffixes are attached to /l/-final nouns, the initial /t/ of the suffix does not surface.

(11) a. saaŋ   'foot'
       saan-tey   'my foot'
       saan-ta   'your foot'
       saan-ti   'the foot'

     b. weel   'calf'   hambal   'leaf'
       weel-ey   'my calf'   hambal-ey   'my leaf'
       weel-a   'your calf'   hambal-a   'your leaf'
       weel-i   'the calf'   hambal-i   'the leaf'

       'yonfol   'bark'   mukulal   'cat'
       'yonfol-ey   'my bark'   mukulal-ey   'my cat'
       'yonfol-a   'your bark'   mukulal-a   'your cat'
       'yonfol-i   'the bark'   mukulal-i   'the cat'

There are two ways of understanding this process. One is in terms of deletion, where a /t/ is deleted whenever it follows an /l/. Alternatively, one could characterize the process as fusion, so that an /l/ and a following /t/ fuse into a single segment [ll], which is later reduced to [l] via the independently motivated Geminate Reduction process to be discussed in §2.3.5. From a learning perspective, one might argue that Coronal Deletion is more straightforward than Coronal Fusion in that it involves only one step and does not require the learner to associate the loss of /t/ in /l + t/ sequences with Geminate Reduction, and therefore that the learner is likely to posit deletion rather than fusion. However, the advantage of the fusion approach is that it connects the process in LJM with the similar process in CS. One could say that the same rule applies in both languages, the difference being that in LJM, Coronal Fusion feeds Geminate Reduction. For this reason, we prefer the Coronal Fusion approach.

2.3.4. Intervocalic Lenition

In LJM, underlying stops (excluding implosives) surface as voiced fricatives in intervocalic position. We account for this via a rule of Intervocalic Lenition. Examples showing the application of the rule are given in (12).

(12) irbit   'needle'   irbið-o   'needles'
       ɗek   'ear'   ɗeɣ-o   'ears'
       ilbap   'door'   ilbaβ-o   'doors'
       kop   'cup'   koβ-o   'cups'

In general, the result of this rule is a lack of stops between vowels in LJM. However, there are some surface exceptions to this, within lexical items, as shown in (13).

(13) /hiddik/   →   hidik   'star'   *hiðik
       /mukkulal/   →   mukulal   'cat'   *muɣulal
       /buubbun/   →   buubuŋ   'snail'   *buuβuŋ

We analyze these forms as having underlying medial geminates, and we assume that Intervocalic Lenition applies prior to the Geminate Reduction rule to be discussed in the next section. This means that the intervocalic stops in (13) result from a counterfeeding relation between lenition and reduction.

A possible alternative analysis of the forms in (13) is that they do not have underlying geminates, but instead the failure of lenition is due to the Intervocalic Lenition rule being restricted to derived environments. However, the forms in (14) are counterexamples to this alternative, since they show that nouns in isolation (i.e., a non-derived environment) do in fact exhibit Intervocalic Lenition.

(14) maða   'head'   aðer   'uncle (father's brother)'
      diβi   'bull'   aɣar   'green'

One could still argue that the forms in (14) have underlying fricatives and therefore do not exhibit Intervocalic Lenition, but since there is no independent need to assume that Intervocalic Lenition is restricted to derived environments, we maintain that all surface exceptions to Intervocalic Lenition correspond to underlying geminates or other CC sequences.

2.3.5. Geminate Reduction

Unlike in CS and SS, there are no surface geminates in LJM. Geminates in LJM undergo a rule of Geminate Reduction, which changes all geminates into their singleton counterparts. Some instances of Geminate Reduction within lexical items were shown in the previous section in example (13). The rule also applies in derived environments, as shown in (15).

(15) /diik + ki/ → diiki   'the rooster'   /gedut + ti/ → geðuti 'the red one' (box)
      /buuk + ki/ → buuki   'the book'

Despite the lack of surface geminates in JLM, the underlying C_iC_i vs. C_i distinction is still maintained intervocalically because while geminates are reduced to singletons, singletons undergo lenition as discussed in the previous section. So, for example, /kk/ surfaces as [k] intervocalically, while /k/ surfaces as [ɣ], as demonstrated in the pair of examples below.

(16) /diik + ki/ → [dii**k**i] 'the rooster'
      /dibi + ki/ → [diβi**ɣ**i] 'the bull'

2.3.6. Nasal Dissimilation

A final phonological rule to be discussed here is Nasal Dissimilation. In LJM, sequences of nasal + *n* always surface as [ŋn]. Some examples are shown below (note that an *N* in an underlying form indicates a nasal with unknown place of articulation).

(17) | Underlying form | | Assimilation | | Dissimilation | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /aam-ni/ | → | aan-ni | → | aaŋ-ni | 'we ate' |
| /unu farahsiN-na/ | → | unu farahsin-na | → | unu farahsiŋ-na | 'we are happy' |
| /unu buuriN-na/ | → | unu buurin-na | → | unu buuriŋ-na | 'we are fat' |
| /unu mooN-na/ | → | unu moon-na | → | unu mooŋ-na | 'we are big' |
| /unu roor doN-ne/ | → | unu roor don-ne | → | unu roor doŋ-ne | 'we will run' |

Nasal Dissimilation is crucially ordered with two other rules already discussed. First, Nasal Dissimilation applies after Nasal Place Assimilation (i.e., a counterfeeding relation). If the ordering were reversed, then Nasal Place Assimilation would always undo the effect of Nasal Dissimilation, and nasal + *n* sequences would incorrectly come out as [nn] rather than [ŋn]. The second crucial ordering is that Nasal Dissimilation bleeds Geminate Reduction: an underlying /n + n/ sequence should surface as [ŋn], not [n] as would be predicted if Geminate Reduction preceded Nasal Dissimilation. Hence, the

order of these three rules is Nasal Place Assimilation > Nasal Dissimilation > Geminate Reduction. As mentioned earlier, Intervocalic Lenition also precedes Geminate Reduction. There are no other crucial orderings among the rules that we have discussed here.

3. Morphology

In this section, we describe the morphology of LJM, focusing mainly on noun morphology. The verbal morphology of LJM is described more fully in Paster 2007.

3.1. Noun morphology

One interesting aspect of LJM noun morphology is the pattern of plural marking with the suffixes *-o* and/or *-yal*. As shown in (18), vowel-final nouns take *-yal* in the plural.

(18) bakaile   'rabbit'   bakaile-yal   'rabbits'
      maða   'head'   maða-yal   'heads'
      inɗo   'eye'   inɗo-yal   'eyes'
      bakeeri   'cup'   bakeeri-yal   'cups'

As shown in (19), there are three possible ways of making a plural form of a consonant-final stem: using *-o*, *-yal*, or both *-o* and *-yal* (in that order).

(19) gaʔaŋ   'hand'   gaʔam-o ~ gaʔañ-yal ~ gaʔam-o-yal   'hands'
      mukulal   'cat'   mukulal-o ~ mukulal-yal ~ mukulal-o-yal 'cats'
      ees   'grass'   ees-o ~ ees-yal ~ ees-o-yal   'grasses'
      hidik   'star'   hidiɣ-o ~ hidig-yal ~ hidiɣ-o-yal   'stars'

The consultant is not able to identify any semantic differences between plurals formed in these different ways. There is also no apparent difference in the function of the different types of plurals. For example, all three types of plurals can be in subject position (20a) or object position (20b).

(20) a. **eey-o**   usu   dil-eena   **yahas-o**   usu   aam-eena
        dog-pl   3sgm   kill-3pl.past   crocodile-pl   3sgm   eat-3pl.past
        'dogs killed him'   'crocodiles ate him'

     eey-yal   usu   dil-eena   **yahas-yal**   usu   aam-eena
     dog-pl   3sgm   kill-3pl.past   crocodile-pl   3sgm   eat-3pl.past
     'dogs killed him'   'crocodiles ate him'

     eey-o-yal   usu   dil-eena   **yahas-o-yal**   usu   aam-eena
     dog-pl-pl   3sgm   kill-3pl.past   crocodile-pl-pl   3sgm   eat-3pl.past
     'dogs killed him'   'crocodiles ate him'

   b. usu   **eey-o**   dil-i   usu   **yahas-o**   aam-i
      3sgm   dog-pl   kill-3sgm.past   3sgm   crocodile-pl   eat-3sgm.past
      'he killed dogs'   'he ate crocodiles'

      usu   **eey-yal**   dil-i   usu   **yahas-yal**   aam-i
      3sgm   dog-pl   kill-3sgm.past   3sgm   crocodile-pl   eat-3sgm.past
      'he killed dogs'   'he ate crocodiles'

      usu   **eey-o-yal**   dil-i   usu   **yahas-o-yal** aam-i
      3sgm   dog-pl-pl   kill-3sgm.past   3sgm   crocodile-pl-pl eat-3sgm.past
      'he killed dogs'   'he ate crocodiles'

There is a series of noun suffixes that agree with the gender of the noun as follows: with some exceptions to be discussed, masculine nouns in LJM generally have *k*-initial suffixes while feminine suffixes have initial *t*.

The definite markers in LJM are *-ki* and *-ti*. Masculine nouns take the *-ki* suffix while feminine nouns take *-ti*. These are cognate with the SS/CS remote/past definite markers; there is no tense/aspect distinction in LJM definite markers. Examples of definite nouns are shown in (21).

(21) diβi-ɣi   'the bull'   saʔ-ði   'the cow (female)'
      inaŋ-ki   'the boy'   gewer-ti   'the girl'
      miis-ki   'the table'   istaraša-ði   'the napkin'
      buug-i   'the book'   yahas-ti   'the crocodile'

Demonstratives[4] exhibit a similar pattern: masculine nouns take *k*-initial suffixes, as shown below.

(22) eey-kaŋ   'this dog'   buug-aŋ   'this book'
      eey-kas   'that dog'   buug-as   'that book'
      eey-kew   'which dog'   buug-ew   'which book'

      geet-kaŋ   'this tree'   megel-kaŋ   'this man'
      geet-kas   'that tree'   megel-kas   'that man'
      geet-kew   'which tree'   megel-kew   'which man'

Feminine nouns take *t*-initial suffixes, as shown below.

(23) yahas-taŋ   'this crocodile'   istaraša-ðaŋ   'this napkin'
      yahas-tas   'that crocodile'   istaraša-ðas   'that napkin'
      yahas-tew   'which crocodile'   istaraša-ðew   'which napkin'

      mukulal-aŋ   'this cat'   bilaan-taŋ   'this woman'
      mukulal-as   'that cat'   bilaan-tas   'that woman'
      mukulal-ew   'which cat'   bilaan-tew   'which woman'

Possessive markers pattern like the other noun suffixes. As shown in (24), the masculine possessive suffixes are *k*-initial, with the exception of the two third person possessives, which are *'y*-initial.[5]

(24) walaal-key   'my brother'   bakeeri-ɣey   'my cup'
      walaal-ka   'your brother'   bakeeri-ɣa   'your cup'
      walaal-'ye   'his/her brother'   bakeeri-'ye   'his/her cup'

      aw-kaynu   'our father'   igar-kaynu   'our son'
      aw-kiŋ   'your pl. father'   igar-kiŋ   'your pl. son'
      aw-'yo   'their father'   igar-'yo   'their son'

As expected, possessive markers with feminine nouns have initial *t*, as shown below. However, there is a twist in the 3sg, which is that the gender of the possessor may be distinguished, i.e., there are different forms meaning 'his' and 'her', as shown in (25). Interestingly, however, it appears the feminine form can always be used with a feminine noun even when the possessor is masculine. For

---

[4] We have put the suffixes meaning 'this X', 'that X', and 'which X' into the general category of demonstratives, but in fact the 'which X' suffixes are interrogative markers found only in questions in our data (this is also true of the cognate morphemes in SS (Saeed 2006: 557)).

[5] See Paster 2007: 91 for an account of the historical development of these two suffixes from *k*-initial suffixes.

example, the form *gewertie* can mean either 'her daughter' or 'his daughter' even though there is a different form, *gewertis*, meaning exclusively 'his daughter'.

(25) gewer-tey   'my daughter'   istaraša-ðey   'my napkin'
      gewer-ta   'your daughter'   istaraša-ða   'your napkin'
      gewer-tis   'his daughter'   istaraša-ðis   'his napkin'
      gewer-tie   'her daughter'   istaraša-ðie   'her napkin'

      mindi-ðayno   'our knife'   ǰeer-tayno   'our hippo'
      mindi-ðiŋ   'your pl. knife'   ǰeer-tiŋ   'your pl. hippo'
      mindi-ðio   'their knife'   ǰeer-tio   'their hippo'

The agreement facts described above apply to singular nouns. When a noun is pluralized, the agreement pattern changes such that all nouns trigger masculine agreement in the plural. As seen in the examples in (26a), masculine nouns take the masculine-agreeing definite marker in the plural, while as seen in (26b), feminine nouns change to masculine agreement in the plural.

(26) a. moos-ki   'the banana'   moos-o-ɣi   'the bananas'
          inaŋ-ki   'the boy'   ɗalo-ɣi   'the boys'

      b. far-ti   'the finger'   far-o-ɣi   'the fingers'
          okun-ti   'the egg'   okum-o-ɣi   'the eggs'
          galanša-ði   'the fem. elephant' galanša-yal-ki   'the fem. elephants'

As shown below, demonstrative suffixes exhibit the same pattern of all-masculine agreement for plural nouns. Masculine nouns are shown in (27a), and feminine nouns are shown in (27b).

(27) a. igar-kaŋ   'this son'   igar-o-ɣaŋ   'these sons'
          eey-kas   'that dog'   eey-o-ɣas   'those dogs'
          bakeeri-ɣas   'that cup'   bakeeri-ɣas   'those cups'
          geet-kew   'which tree'   geeð-o-ɣew   'which trees'

      b. bilaan-taŋ   'this woman'   bilaam-o-ɣaŋ   'these women'
          yahas-tas   'that crocodile'   yahas-o-ɣas   'those crocodiles'
          istaraša-ðew   'which napkin'   istaraša-yal-kew   'which napkins'
          mukulal-ew   'which cat'   mukulal-o-ɣew   'which cats'

As expected, possessive marking follows the same pattern as definites and demonstratives, where both masculine nouns (28a) and feminine nouns (28b) exhibit masculine agreement in the plural.

(28) a. eey-key   'my dog'   eey-o-ɣey   'my dogs'
          eey-ka   'your dog'   eey-o-ɣa   'your dogs'
          eey-'ye   'his/her dog'   eey-o-'ye   'his/her dogs'

          igar-kayno   'our son'   igar-o-ɣayno   'our sons'
          igar-kiŋ   'your pl. son'   igar-o-ɣiŋ   'your pl. sons'
          igar-'yo   'their son'   igar-o-'yo   'their sons'

      b. mindi-ðey   'my knife'   mindi-yal-key   'my knives'
          mindi-ða   'your knife'   mindi-yal-ka   'your knives'
          mindi-ðis   'his knife'   mindi-yal-'ye   'his/her knives'
          mindi-ðie   'her knife'

saʔ-ðey	'my cow'	saʔ-o-ɣey	'my cows'
saʔ-ða	'your cow'	saʔ-o-ɣa	'your cows'
saʔ-ðis	'his cow'	saʔ-o-'ye	'his/her cows'
saʔ-ðie	'her cow'		
gewer-tayno	'our daughter'	gewer-o-ɣayno	'our daughters'
gewer-tiŋ	'your pl. daughter'	gewer-o-ɣiŋ	'your pl. daughters'
gewer-tio	'their daughter'	gewer-o-'yo	'their daughters'
hambal-tayno	'our leaf'	hambal-o-ɣayno	'our leaves'
hambal-tiŋ	'your pl. leaf'	hambal-o-ɣiŋ	'your pl. leaves'
hambal-tio	'their leaf'	hambal-o-'yo	'their leaves'

This pattern of gender-number interaction in LJM differs from the patterns in SS, CS, and other Somali dialects. SS has a 'gender polarity' pattern in which 'most nouns reverse their gender when they become plural' (Saeed 1987: 115). This applies to both masculine and feminine nouns in SS. CS also exhibits gender polarity, but it applies only to plurals formed with the -*o* suffix; for plurals formed with -*yal*, all plural nouns are masculine (the choice of which suffix is used to form the plural in CS is lexically determined, not phonologically determined as in LJM). And in the unidentified Somali dialect discussed by Lecarme (2002), -*yal* plurals exhibit true polarity, while -*o* plurals always exhibit masculine agreement (Lecarme 2002: 118-119). Unlike in these other dialects, in LJM, all plurals in both -*o* and -*yal* (as well as -*o-yal*) have masculine agreement.

3.2. Verb morphology

We will not describe the verbal morphology in detail here (see Paster 2007), but the Person/Number/Gender suffixes are shown below.

Table 1: Summary of verbal morphology

Person/Number/Gender suffix on main verb						
Tense/Aspect		1sg/3sgm	2sg/3sgf	1pl	2pl	3pl
Simple Past/	Aff.	-i	-ti	-ni	-teena	-eena
Past Progressive	Neg.	None	None	None	None	None
Simple Present A[6]/	Aff.	-e	-te	-ne	-teena	-eena
Present Progressive	Neg.	-o	-to	-no	-toona	-oona
Simple Present B	Aff.	-ya	-ta	-na	-tena	-yena
	Neg.	-yo	-to	-no	-tona	-yona
Generic Future	Aff.	-ya	-te	-ne	-teena	-yeena
	Neg.	-yo	-to	-no	-toona	-yoona
Immediate Future	Aff.	-e	-ase	-ane	-aseena	-ayeena
	Neg.	-aw	-aso	-ano	-asoona	-ayoona
Near Future/	Aff./Neg.	-o	-to	-no	-tona	-ona
Generic Potential						
Imperative	Aff.	NA	-Ø/NA	NA	-a	NA
	Neg.	NA	-to/NA	NA	-tona	NA
Future Potential	Aff./Neg.	-aw	-aso	-aano	-aasona	-aayona
Past Habitual	Aff./Neg.	None	None	None	None	None

---

[6] 'Simple Present A' and 'Simple Present B' are two different present tense constructions that differ in the shape of the person marking suffixes and the types of verbs to which they apply. Briefly, Simple Present A is quite restricted in its distribution, being limited to only a couple of verbs that act as auxiliaries. Simple Present B, on the other hand, is productive, but it applies only to stative verbs. See Paster 2007 for further discussion.

A few observations may be made about the verbal morphology as summarized above. First, the 1sg and 3sg masculine suffixes are always identical to each other, as are the 2sg and 3sg feminine suffixes. Second, the 1pl suffixes all contain /n/ (most are *n*-initial). Where 1pl has /n/, the second person and feminine markers all have *t* (or **t > s*). And finally, the 2pl and 3pl suffixes are always identical except that 2pl has /t/ or /s/ where 3pl has Ø or /y/. These facts are suggestive that person, number, and gender could be segregated as separate morphemes from the tense/aspect suffixes (which they must have been historically), but the pattern is a little too irregular to warrant positing separate morphemes in the synchronic grammar.

3.3. Reduplication

Reduplication occurs in some limited contexts in LJM. In particular, adjectives that modify plural nouns often undergo reduplication of the word initial CV. Reduplication of the adjective makes other plural marking optional, as shown in the examples below.

(29) bilaam(-o)(-yal)   fa-fas   geeð(-o)(-yal)   ɗe-ɗeer
      woman(-pl)(-pl)   RED-beautiful   tree(-pl)(-pl)   RED-tall
      'beautiful women'   'tall trees'

      geeð(-o)(-yal)   mo-mooŋ   wakwak   wi-wiŋ
      tree(-pl)(-pl)   RED-big   toad   RED-big
      'big trees'   'big toads'[7]

4. Word order

LJM exhibits variable but not entirely free word order in declarative sentences. The consultant exhibits a preference for SOV word order, as in the sentences in (30).

(30) ani   walal   ɠaw-e   usu   baaka   feð-oy-e
      1sg   sister have-1sg   3sgm   box   open-prog-1sg
      'I have a sister'   'he is opening a box'

      fanay barit   karit-i   ani   usu   araɣ-oy-e
      Fanaj rice   cook-3sgf.past 1sg   3sgm   see-prog-1sg
      'Fanaj cooked rice'   'I see him'

In sentences with a ditransitive verb, the direct and indirect objects can occur in either order. The consultant does not exhibit a clear preference as to the order of the objects.

(31) fanay barit nur en karit-i   ~   fanay nur   barit en   karit-i
      Fanaj rice Noor for cook-3sgf.past   Fanaj Noor   rice   for cook-3sgf.past
      'Fanaj cooked rice for Noor'

In fact, with a ditransitive verb, all three arguments are apparently freely orderable. The consultant volunteers sentences where the subject is in non-initial position, and does not exhibit as strong a preference for S(IO)OV order as with monotransitive verbs. What does seem to be consistent, however, is that the verb occurs in final position. Consider the sentences in (32), all of which translate to 'the boy broke the window with a ball,' and all of which have the verb in final position.

---

[7] Note that in this example, *wakwak* is not (synchronically) reduplicated; i.e., there is apparently no word **wak*, and *wakwak* is singular. Thus, the plurality of *wakwak wiwiŋ* is marked by the reduplication of the adjective.

(32)
inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti	dariša-ði	ka	’yaβ-i-i
boy-det	ball-det	window-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði	baloon-ti	ka	’yaβ-i-i
boy-det	window-det	ball-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

dariša-ði	baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki	ka	’yaβ-i-i
window-det	ball-det	boy-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti	ka	’yaβ-i-i
window-det	boy-det	ball-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

baloon-ti	dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki	ka	’yaβ-i-i
ball-det	window-det	boy-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði	ka	’yaβ-i-i
ball-det	boy-det	window-det	inst	break-caus-3sgm.past

The sentences in (33), on the other hand, are deemed ungrammatical. These represent all of the logically possible versions of the sentence in (32) in which the verb occurs in non-final position.

(33)
*inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti	ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði
*inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði	ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti
*inaŋ-ki	ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði	baloon-ti
*inaŋ-ki	ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti	dariša-ði
*dariša-ði	baloon-ti	ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki
*dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki	ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti
*dariša-ði	ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti
*dariša-ði	ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki
*baloon-ti	dariša-ði	ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki
*baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki	ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði
*baloon-ti	ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki
*baloon-ti	ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti	dariša-ði
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði	baloon-ti
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki	dariša-ði
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	baloon-ti	dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði	inaŋ-ki	baloon-ti
*ka ’yaβ-i-i	dariša-ði	baloon-ti	inaŋ-ki

Future research will determine whether there are contexts in which a verb occurs in non-final position in a declarative sentence, and will also uncover the principles of word order in other sentence types including questions. We acknowledge that focus or topicalization may play a role in word order variation, as suggested by a reviewer. We have begun to investigate this but have found no evidence for either so far.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have highlighted some features of the grammar of Lower Jubba Maay, which has been demonstrated to be significantly different from dialects of Somali that have been documented in the literature.

References

Hyman, Larry M. 1981. Tonal accent in Somali. *Studies in African Linguistics* 12.2: 169-201.

Lecarme, Jacqueline. 2002. Gender 'polarity': Theoretical aspects of Somali nominal morphology. *Many Morphologies*, ed. by Paul Boucher and Marc Plénat. Somerville, Massachusetts: Cascadilla Press. Pp. 109-141.

Paster, Mary. 2007. Aspects of Maay phonology and morphology. *Studies in African Linguistics* 35.1: 73-120.

Saeed, John I. 1982. *Central Somali: A Grammatical Outline. Monographic Journals of the Near East: Afroasiatic Linguistics* 8.2. Malibu, California: Undena Publications.

Saeed, John I. 1987. *Somali Reference Grammar*. Wheaton, Maryland: Dunwoody Press.

Saeed, John I. 1999. *Somali*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Saeed, John I. 2006. Somali morphology. *Morphologies of Asia and Africa, Volume 1,* ed. by Alan S. Kaye. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns. Pp. 547-586.

Selected Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: Linguistic Theory and African Language Documentation

edited by Masangu Matondo, Fiona Mc Laughlin, and Eric Potsdam

Cascadilla Proceedings Project   Somerville, MA   2009

Ordering information

Orders for the library binding edition are handled by Cascadilla Press.
To place an order, go to www.lingref.com or contact:

Cascadilla Press, P.O. Box 440355, Somerville, MA 02144, USA
phone: 1-617-776-2370, fax: 1-617-776-2271, e-mail: sales@cascadilla.com

Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at www.lingref.com. Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

Comfort, Jade and Mary Paster. 2009. Notes on Lower Jubba Maay. In *Selected Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, ed. Masangu Matondo, Fiona Mc Laughlin, and Eric Potsdam, 204-216. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

or:

Comfort, Jade and Mary Paster. 2009. Notes on Lower Jubba Maay. In *Selected Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, ed. Masangu Matondo, Fiona Mc Laughlin, and Eric Potsdam, 204-216. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com, document #2148.