

Rooxaan

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This article was originally written in Somali and was translated by Martin Orwin.

Abstract

This very brief outline shows the potential of the Corpus of Somali Language which has been developed and is based at the Hargeysa Cultural Centre in looking at language use in literary and other texts. Some of the tools available have been applied to the story *Rooxaan* by Shire Jaamac Axmed and a brief overview is given here of issues relating to depositing written works into the repository and the sort of information that results from use of the tools available.

1 *Rooxaan*

The story *Rooxaan* ‘Spirits’ (Shire Jaamac Axmed, 1973b) is one of the written works chosen to be part of the project for the repository of Somali literature and its words. The work was written by Shire Jaamac Axmed and published by the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education in Mogadishu in 1973. Shire wrote a number of books and is remembered as the publisher of a journal which came out in the late 1960s in Somalia called *Iftiinka Aqoonta* ‘The Light of Knowledge’ (1966-7). He wrote two stories: *Rooxaan* ‘Spirits’ and *Halgankii Nolasha* ‘The Struggle of Life’ (Shire Jaamac Axmed, 1973a). He also played an important role, as a member of the different Somali language committees, in the choice of writing system which was to be adopted for the Somali language.

The Repository of Somali Literature and its Words is a research project based on the Corpus of Somali Language housed in the

Hargeysa Cultural Centre. It is a repository in which the words of Somali from the corpus are archived along with details of their morphology, etymology and categorization into parts of speech. Details are also stored of how each word is used in different contexts: poetry and prose, academic use, entertainment, official use and scientific research, fictional stories, essays, written and oral literature. It includes works already written and/or published and works which were originally in unwritten (oral) form and which have been written specifically for this project, e.g. the work of poets which has been transcribed.

The method used for entering *Rooxaan* was first to make a copy of the book published in Mogadishu and then to have it read by the optical character recognition application ‘ABBY Finereader 12’ which captures the imaged letters. After that the spelling was corrected in all the places the software had made a mistake, comparing it with the original publication. The words which were changed were only those ones below which are spelling or typographical mistakes. The label [n:m] shows the place in the published version where something has been changed (‘n’ indicates the page number and ‘m’ indicates the line number).

[1:3] shire > Shire; [3:28] inuu uga jawaabo wiilkiisu weydiyey > inuu uga jawaabo [su’aasha] wiilkiisu weydiyey; [4:4] raca > raaca; [5:5] Saaleh > Saalax; [5:7] shiikh > Shiikh; [6:38] ayuu a aaminsanaa > ayuu u aaminsanaa; [7:36] Isagi > isagu; [9:1] Maandow > Maandhow; [9:26] haddi > haddii; [9: 28] naagod > naagood; [10:17] car-rurta > carruurta; [10:31] shiikh > Shiikh; [14:16] Wuu joogaa? > Wuu joogaa.

Finally this present brief analysis does not concern the topic of the story; it is limited to the way the piece has been crafted and the use of words by the author. The importance is in the archiving of this piece of writing in which we see a high quality of both the craft of writing and the handling of the topic; it can be described as one of the finest pieces written in the Somali language.

Words which require comment but which have not been changed are given below.

1. [3:1] *Waalidyadiis* might correctly be *Waalidkiis* because the latter is a word mostly used for the plural.
2. [14:14] *marakan* > this is now generally spelled *markan*. *Marakan* seems to me to be colloquial or ‘street’ language.
3. The use of the spelling *Muqdishow* rather than *Muqdisho* is an interesting matter.

Interesting words which merit further consideration are given below.

1. [3:6] *yaleex jilicsan* > the word *yaleex* which is synonymous with *yix* is not in the corpus apart from the dictionary entry.
2. [3:24] *afjigi jirey* > the verb *afjigi* is now being used less, with the word *cabbudhi* being used instead. The most appropriate meaning is given in Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur and Puglielli (2012) ‘afjig f.g1 (-gay, -gtay) Qof hadlaya, iyadoo loo diidayo inuu sheego sir ama wax aan habboonayn hadal ka joojin.’
3. [4:6] *ku jilnaa* > *jilnaa*, the word *jilan* which means ‘living with someone’ is used little these days.
4. [4:32] *illowse* > the author uses this word for *hase yeeshee* or *laakinse* but I hadn’t come across this structure before. He has used it in a few places. See Figure 3 for the concordance of the word *illowse*.
5. [5:6] *idilu* > I would write *idili*. It doesn’t seem to be a wrong spelling because analogous uses of *-u* are found (see [9:12] below).

6. [6:8] **baabuurka gaarigiisa** > it might be thought that these two words **gaari** and **baabuur** would now be used as synonyms whereas Shire Jaamac recognized the difference between the cab of a lorry and its body.
7. [9:12] **lehu** > I would write **lehi** though it doesn't seem like a spelling mistake (cf. [5.6] **idilu** above).

The total number of words the author used comes to 3820 with 1345 of these words being distinct. The five most used words are **wuxuu** (116), **Guhaad** (104), **oo** (92), **ayuu** (91) and **ku** (8). Figure 1 shows the concordance for the word **wuxuu**.

Figure 2 shows the most common pairings of words from which the five most numerous in order are: 'Shiikh Muxsin', 'wuxuu ku', 'Shiikh Saalax', 'Guhaad wuxuu' and 'ka soo'.

Finally, Figure 3 shows the concordance of the word **illowse** and how the author used it where otherwise **haseyeeshee** or **laakinse** might be used.

Bibliography

- Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur and A. Puglielli (2012). *Qaamuuska Af-Soomaaliga*. Rome: Roma TrE-Press.
- Shire Jaamac Axmed (1973a). *Halgankii Nolosh*. Xamar: Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare.
- Shire Jaamac Axmed (1973b). *Rooxaan*. Xamar: Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare.

Figure 1: Concordance for the word wuxuu

SomConcor - Ver. 1.0. 2014, Redsea Culture Foundation

File Raadi Agab Kaalmo

Fur gal kale somConcor Ka bax

Rooxaan - Faallo Rakaadka ereyga Dhererka ereyga Is oggolaanshaha Is cugashada

Sadarka	Ka hore	Ereyga	Ka dib
69		Guhaad	ku noolaa Muqdishow. Waalidiyadiis
71	yilhiin, timihiisuna waa yaleex jilicsan. Sankiisa	wuxuu	uga eg yahay aabbihiis oo wuu toosan yahay. Joogg
73	aha Guhaad wuu fidsanaa. Intuusan iman Muqdishow,	wuxuu	ku noolaan jirey tuulo. Tuuladaas waxaa lagu maga
75	Guhaad marku cayaarta ka soo noqdo,	wuxuu	ula imaan jirey aabbihiis weydiimo badan ee ku sa
77	Aabbihiis wuu afjigi jirey wiilkiisa oo	wuxuu	dhihi jirey, «laah baa naga og
79	Shiikh Saalax,	wuxuu	ahaa wadaad buuran oo madaxa cimaamad ku sita. Re
81	Shiikh Saalax. Iyagu waxay dhihi jireen «Shiikhu	wuxuu	leeyahay karaamo badan. Isagu waa weli Alla» Shii
83	Dadka buka Shiikhu	wuxuu	u tuffi jirey tahaliil,
85	, Shiikh Saalax wuu ka birbirayey. Isaga oo idilu	wuxuu	ahaa nin yaab leh. Guhaad intaas oo dhan wuu ku o
87	llaah oon aadmigu cilmi ku lahayn. Shiikh Saalax	wuxuu	uga sheekeeyey wiilki, inay Muqdishow jiraan nim
89	Guhaad	wuxuu	jecleystay inuu Muqdishow u dhoofa oo uu soo arko
91	maha ka mid ah, kaga soo tegey Gellinsoor. Guhaad	wuxuu	ku soo dhuntay baabuur weyn oo xoolaha iyo dadka
93	Sannadkaas	wuxuu	ku dhameeyay jus-camma. Guhaad markaan wax wuu ak
95	d Muqdishow, ayuu shogo ka helay. Maalintii isagu	wuxuu	ku shaqayn jirey 3 shiin. Makhaayad ayaa habarya
100	oogo, ayaa ninkii makhaayadda lahaa yimid. Guhaad	wuxuu	u sheegay ninkii in lacagtii laga xaday. Ninkii w
104	axaa la yiraahdaa «Shiikh Muxsin». Guhaad markaas	wuxuu	haystay lacag 200 oo shilin ah oo uu ka shaqaysta
106	in. Markuu dadka rooxaanta uga warramayo, Shiikhu	wuxuu	ka qaataa lacag badan. Guriga Shiikh Muxsin waa m
108	ska aamustaa. Shiikh Muxsin haddii ay ka carooto,	wuxuu	u sheegaa inuu furi doono, haddaynan masayrka isk
110	Shiikh Muxsin	wuxuu	hadda ka hor gursaday shan iyo toban naagood. Dh
112	Wuxuuse aad wax u cunaa qadada. Dad badan, ayaa	wuxuu	allabari ugu keena waxaro dhaylo ah Shiikha. lac
114	, isaga oo ulajeeda middaas xurmo. Guhaad markaas	wuxuu	gacanta Shiikha ugu laabay 100 shilin. Shiikh Mux
116	arafuun. Guhaad hadalkii Shiikha war kama celine,	wuxuu	ku degdegay dukaamada. Wuxuu soo gaday wiilii Shii
118	day waxay ku fariistay 70 shilin. Guhaad alaabtii	wuxuu	ula orday Shiikha. Wuu u geeyey. Shiikhu alaabtii
120	baqayey rooxaantii uu riyada ku arkay. Cariishku	wuxuu	leeyahay daldaloollu. Gudaha cariishka waxaa ku d
122	Wadnihiisu	wuxuu	lahaa rug-rug. Markaas ayuu albaabkii furay marki
124	a ka soo baxay bulaan. Guhaad wuu farax markaan,	wuxuu	na moodayey inay rooxaantu u sheegi doonto meesha
126	nbe ayuu ku noqday gurigii Shiikh Muxsin. Markaan	wuxuu	doonayey inuu ogaado runta keliya. Guhaad markaan
128	Gurigu	wuxuu	ahaa mugdi, Shiikhuna
130	ay. Intuusan ka bixin gurigii Shiikh Muxsin, ayuu	wuxuu	ku xusayta maahmaahdii lahayd. «Meeshii iiliiin soo

Rooxaan - Faallo Ka raadi ereyga: wuxuu

Figure 2: The most common pairings of words

SomConcor - Ver. 1.0. 2014, Redsea Culture Foundation

File Raadi Agab Kaalmo

Fur gal kale somConcor Ka bax

Rooxaan - Faallo Rakaadka ereyga Dhererka ereyga Is oggolaanshaha Is cugashada

Heerka	Is cugashada lammaanaha	Kalgalka	Horraad	Danbeed
5.554588851777638	shiihk muxsin	29	69	34
3.0000000001	wuxuu ku	22	116	87
5.459431618737297	shiihk saalax	20	69	25
1.5849625008211563	guhaad wuxuu	12	104	116
2.321928094987362	wuxuu u	12	116	74
3.700439718241092	ka soo	11	73	43
5.614709844215208	markii uu	11	23	37
4.523561956157013	wuxuu ahaa	10	116	14
3.0000000001	guhaad wuu	10	104	41
2.321928094987362	ayuu u	10	91	74
3.9068905957085187	waxaa ka	9	30	73
4.906890595708519	ku arkay	9	87	13
1.5849625008211563	ayuu guhaad	8	91	104
2.807354922157604	ku soo	7	87	43
4.0000000001	ku yiri	7	87	19
1.5849625008211563	ayuu ku	7	91	87
2.807354922157604	waxay ku	7	40	87
2.807354922157604	waxay ka	6	40	73
1.0000000001	wuxuu ka	6	116	73
2.807354922157604	wuu ka	6	41	73
4.584962500821157	isaga oo	6	10	92
3.0000000001	ah oo	6	30	92
4.906890595708519	u sheegay	6	74	10
4.321928094987363	guhaad markaas	6	104	11
7.894817763407945	maxaa yeela	5	10	8
2.584962500821156	saalax wuxuu	5	25	116
3.3219280949873626	shiihku wuxuu	5	16	116
4.643856189874724	weyn oo	5	8	92
2.584962500821156	waxuu u	5	40	74

Ka saar midh kaliyaalaha Tax dhammaan

Rooxaan - Faallo Ka raadi ereyga: wuxuu

Figure 3: Concordance of the word *illowse*

The screenshot shows the SomConcor software interface. The title bar reads "SomConcor - Ver. 1.0, 2014, Redsea Culture Foundation". The menu bar includes "File", "Raadi", "Agab", and "Kaalmo". Below the menu bar are buttons for "Fur gal kale", "somConcor", and "Ka bax". The main window has several tabs: "Rooxaan - Faallo", "Rakaadka ereyga", "Dhererka ereyga", "Is oggolaanshaha", and "Is cugashada". The "Is oggolaanshaha" tab is active, displaying a concordance table for the word "illowse".

Sadarka	Ka hore	Ereyga	Ka dib
67	rey qiliq iyo foox. Shiiikh Saalax xaas ayuu lahaa,	illowse	.xaaskisu lama degganeyn isaga. Aqal Soomaaliga.
77	markaan wax wuu akhriin karaa, wuuna dhigi karaa,	illowse	ma yaqaanno wuxuu akhriyayo macnaha. Ardo bada
92	hashay. Wax badan ayay ka masayrsanayd minyarada,	illowse	.waxay ogaatey hadda inay duqowday oo carruur iyo

At the bottom of the window, there is a search bar with the text "Rooxaan - Faallo" and "Ka raadi ereyga: illowse".