PROVERBS AS ARTISTIC DISCOURSE
STRATEGY IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION
AMONG KENYAN SOMALI

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Declaration

This is my original work and it has not been presented for the award of a
degree in any other university

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with grateful love to my mother, Halima Dabbar Kheir, for her ineffable devotion in raising and educating me.
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Definition Of Terms

Kenyan Somali : Ethnic Somali in north eastern province of Kenya.

Conflict : Disputes among the clan


Study : Research Findings

Negotiation : Peace talks between the clans

Conflict Resolution : Settling of disputes among the clans

Council of Elders : Headmen

Opinion Leaders : Opinion shapers

Community : Kenyans of Somalia origin

Respondent : Interviewee

Research Community : Kenyan Somali

Immams/Sheikhs : Religious Leaders

Grazing land : A piece of land exclusive for a certain clan
Abstract

The study was motivated by the fact that little research has gone into the analysis of the Kenyan Somali proverbs although this genre not only occupies a central position in this community, but also serves many functions in the same community.

In this study, we analyze Kenyan Somali proverbs. Specifically, we analyze the ways in which the proverb is used by the community to resolve conflicts. Details of performance, language and function are elucidated particularly in relation to how they aid in conflict resolution by the community members.

The study is about the Kenyan Somali proverb. The research is based on North Eastern Province of Kenya where the ethnic Somali concentrate. The study investigates the functions, language and performance of the proverb. The Kenyan Somali proverb has many functions but the focus of this study is the function of resolving clan conflicts.

One hundred and forty six (146) proverbs were collected, but for the purpose of this study one hundred and one (101) were used for illustrations.

This study is deemed necessary because the Kenyan Somali proverb, in the past, did not enjoy much of the attention of oral literature scholars. Therefore, there is need to study the proverb, especially how it is used as a conflict resolution tool. On the other hand, we understand there are many conflicts in the world and in Kenya and there are attempts on how to solve them. This study will contribute to whatever existing knowledge we have on how to solve conflicts and it may particularly assist government administrators who are often confronted with conflicts, especially in rural areas.

The methodology used in the collection of the material analyzed originates from various sources. Consulting with various sources was important because we needed a variety of data for our study. The researcher, for example, actively participated in peace meetings where live performances of the proverb were recorded. The recording was done through video, still pictures, pen and paper. Data from the field provided material for analysis which included proverbs, discussions, interviews and photographs. The researcher hired and trained six research assistants, one each from the six main clans of the Kenyan Somali. Thirty two men and twelve women who are considered opinion leaders were interviewed.

In collecting the required data, the researcher also undertook library research. The library sources were necessary in order to build the theoretical basis for our study as well as to provide material to support the arguments advanced in the study. All these have been useful in building our discussions on how and why proverbs are used in conflict resolution in the Kenyan Somali community.

The results of the study reveal that the proverb is used to resolve conflicts and this is mainly so because of the language (style) used and the performance which include both verbal and non-verbal.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Background to the Study Problem

The Kenyan Somali, whose oral literature genre, the proverb, will be analyzed in this study, inhabit the vast arid North Eastern Province of Kenya. The main activity of the Kenyan Somali is herding livestock, which mainly consists of the camel, cattle, sheep and goats.

The land is dry and hot with erratic and unreliable rainfall while the temperature sometimes rises to over 40 degrees centigrade. Because of this, there are limited watersheds and green grazing fields. The various clans, therefore, usually are in competition over the scarce pastures and water resources. This often leads to inter-clan clashes- thus necessitating frequent and drawn out negotiations by the clan elders to resolve the conflicts. The Kenyan Somali community is divided into six major clans and each one of them has a traditional grazing land. In the event of a clan encroaching the grazing land of another, deadly clashes ensue. Due to frequent drought in the area, herders often roam with their stock and cross over to other clans’ lands; therefore, tribal clashes are as frequent as the drought. Negotiations are usually conducted through use of the proverb.
Oral Literature reflects the socio-economic issues of its society. It is composed and transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation and changes from time to time to reflect social changes.

The proverb has some artistic qualities, as we shall see later in this chapter, which suite this purpose. This artistic expression is a preserve of elderly men, who are, traditionally, involved in conflicts resolutions in the community.

However, here a disclaimer is necessary: proverbs do not exist solely for the purpose of resolving conflicts; they are important in many other ways as we shall show later. They occupy a central position in the life of the Kenyan Somalis. An elder’s esteem, maturity and worldview are measured in terms of his ability to wield proverbs with rhetorical prowess in discourse. Proverbs are significant motifs in any meaningful oration that is meant to resolve any conflict or change a particular behaviour. Somali proverbs are considered as authoritative and are never questioned. In other words, the users of the proverb do not scrutinize its message or content.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to analyze the Kenyan Somali proverb with a view to elucidate its functions. Specifically, we analyze the ways in which the community
uses the proverb to resolve conflicts. Details of oratory skills, performance, style, as well as functions are elucidated, particularly in relation to how they contribute to conflict resolution by the community members.

Our study questions are: how does the Kenyan Somali community use the proverb to resolve conflicts? Is that one of the functions of the proverb? Does the language of the proverb play any role in the task of solving clan conflicts? What of the performance? Does it enrich the conflict resolution message of the proverb?

1.2 Study Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To give a brief sociological survey of the Kenyan Somali community

2. To analyze the content and function of the Somali proverb.

3. To discuss the language of the Kenyan Somali proverb and how it helps communicate messages on conflict resolution in the community.

4. To discuss performance of the proverb in relation to conflict resolution in the community.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

This study is guided by the following premises:
1. There is no relationship between the functions of the Somali proverb and its utilization as a conflict resolution tool by the community.

2. There is no relationship between the style of the Somali proverb and its use to resolve conflicts by the community.

3. The performance details of the Somali proverb aid to add colour to this verbal art rather than help in communicating messages on conflict resolution in the community.

1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study

This study is justified at several levels:

Despite the major role that the proverb serves in this community, little research, if any, has been conducted on it. What appears to be close to academic work on this genre is a mere collection of proverbs from the vast Somali land by Mohammed (1974). This underlines the need not only to collect but also to study the Kenyan Somali proverb, particularly to show how the community uses it for conflict resolution.

The Kenyan Somali proverb has, in the past, attracted limited attention from the international as well as local scholars (Barre 1994). For example, during the 1950s, 60s and 70s when writers like Bell [1953], Galal [1956], Andrezejewski [1964], Aw-Jama [1976] and others scrambled to collect and analyze oral literature material
from Somali, the proverb was neglected. This means that there is a compelling need not only to collect but also to study this verbal art so as to unearth its aesthetics and functions in the context of the Kenyan Somali.

The world is torn with strife and conflict. Kenya has not been spared this turmoil, for example, in the early and mid 1990s and after the 2007 elections the country found itself steeped in bloody ethnic violence that led to loss of lives and property. The affected areas were mainly Rift Valley, Coast and Western provinces. The results of this study will show how proverbs can be utilized to resolve conflict; therefore, it may be useful, as a guide and a strategy, for those involved in conflict resolution not only in Kenya but also around the world.

The study offers guidelines on how peace can be achieved from the standpoint of the discipline within which it is developed. It, therefore, contributes to the existing pool of knowledge of other disciplines. Generalizations on conflict resolution as well as theories and methods on the same can then be developed from such specific / focused studies.

Finally, this study falls in the larger body of studies on conflict resolution. The findings of the study, I hope, will enable the government officials, especially the
administrators, not only to detect the impending clan conflicts but also to equip
themselves with knowledge and skills of resolving them.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This is basically a study of the Kenyan Somali proverb. We make a distinct
identification of our study area since Somali people are also found in the Somali
Republic, Djibouti and Ethiopia.

Our focus in the study, as earlier stated, is on how the Somali use the proverb as a
strategy to resolve conflicts. This is an in depth study of this verbal art with regard
to language (literary qualities of the proverb) and how it helps in peace
communication, performance and how this contributes not only to the aesthetics of
the proverb but also communicate messages on conflict resolution. This scope also
gave us the opportunity to focus on the content and function of the proverb with
regard to conflict resolution.

We collected 145 proverbs. However, for purposes of this thesis we used 101
proverbs as a basis for illustrating our arguments. The 101 proverbs were selected
using purposive sampling technique, that is, they were chosen on the basis of how
best they were in terms of messages on conflict resolution. The researcher sought
guidance from the societal opinion leaders in the selection of the 101 proverbs.

One hundred and one proverbs were deemed sufficient for the study because of time
and resource constraints. In addition they were the best proverbs in the collected
 corpus.

1.6 Literature Review

Many oral literature studies by world literary scholars are hereby gratefully
acknowledged. Some of the latest works on oral literature with emphasis on the
aesthetics, functions and performance of the proverb are hereunder reviewed:

Foley (1999) analyses proverbs and their functions in South Slavia. He also
comparatively discusses epic songs, narratives and proverbs and their relationship.
The writer provides examples of how proverbs enrich narratives and epic songs “not
simply ornamenting or emphasizing the skeletal action but by engaging dedicated
fields of traditional reference and thereby helping to deepen the context in which the
individual events occur.” (Foley, 1999:46)
Foley also provides some explanation of the language register of the proverbs. He, for example, remarks that the phraseology, patterns and idiomatic meanings of the proverbs allow the singer and his audience to engage in a highly philosophical communication.

Foley's work, though set in a different social environment, is an invaluable guide for this study in the sense that like South Slavic proverbs, the Kenyan Somali proverbs are mingled with songs which enrich their messages of conflict resolution. Sometimes one might find a whole stanza of a poem is just nothing but a collection of proverbs.

According to Hasan – Rokem (1992), a proverb is a verbal genre of folklore which is widely employed in literary contexts. The proverb, which is usually not more than one sentence, expresses one main idea. According to Hasan – Rokem, a proverb carries a message which implies a summary of the wisdom of collective experience characterized by having a formulaic introduction such as "it is said" or "the old people say". She contends that, in the proverb, all forms of poetic language and style of oral forms are used and the wording formulae follow the poetic convention of its community.
We support Hassan-Rokem's view when she asserts:

Proverbs are usually applied in situations characterized by conflict, skepticism, or other kinds of oppositionally structured mental dispositions. Invoking the authority of a proverb in such contexts transfers the difficulty from a personal to a conceptual level, thereby restoring equilibrium to the specific occurrence that threatens the community's traditional values (Hasan-Rokem, 1992: 129).

Seitel (1976) presents the proverb as a strategic social use of metaphor. He argues that proverbs are used in interaction context to serve certain purposes. The writer formulates an investigative approach developed from the ethnographic perspective whose main purpose is to investigate the explication of meaning in proverbs through a cultural context. Extensively quoting from the African writers, especially Achebe, and their heavy usage of oral materials in their writing, the author tries to explain the correlation between the proverb, context and the interaction between the speaker and the hearer.

Seitel argues that the use of proverbs is mainly metaphorical in the sense that there is always a big difference between the situation that is literally in the proverb and the context to which the proverb refers. His work helps us understand the deep metaphorical usage of proverbs in general and this will help us to analyse the use of metaphor in the Kenyan Somali proverb.
Arvo Krikman (1988) closely examines the relationship of the rhetorical, modal, logical and syntactic aspects in Estonian proverbs. In his study of the structural aspects of the proverbs and the relationship between the various formulae of classification, he specifically selects “Who” and “That” models of pattern and compares them with other prevalent types of “If / When”, “What”, “More” and “As”. He further examines the persona of the addressee by the various types he identifies, that is, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person and notes the variations.

Krikman also puts proverbs into different identities. He takes into account the modal sentence structure of the forms and comes up with “parallelist forms” which he classifies into the “synonymous” and the “antonymous” modes of parallelism. According to him synonymous parallelism classifies the proverbs in terms of similarities in meaning, while the antonymous parallelism classifies proverbs with their corresponding opposites. Krikman’s work gives us some very useful guide in our own analysis and explication of parallelism in the Kenyan Somali proverb.

Another scholar, Dorson (1972), cites a paper by Lawrence A. Boadi which analyses the role of proverbs in African societies. In his discussion on the language of the Akan proverbs, the writer disputes the popular belief held by some scholars that “in pre-literate societies, the main role of the proverb was (only) to provide a storehouse of native wisdom and philosophy and a code of behaviour for children and youth”.

The author argues that this view is too limited and ignores the most important aspect of the proverb as an art form. He says a keen study of the language of the proverb indicates that there is a poetic dimension and the performer often elevates his message poetically. The work also acknowledges the devastating loss in translation of indigenous oral materials. The work does not subject the Akan proverbs used during peace meeting to a thorough analyses, but it shows us the way forward as we discuss the literary qualities and the role of the proverb in sensitizing the agenda of social gatherings.

Finnegan (1970) deals with the nature, significance and purposes of oral literature. The area that we are specifically interested in is the significance and meaning of the proverb. Finnegan discusses the form, style, content, occasions and functions of proverbs. Drawing specific examples from the Ghananians and the Zulu of South Africa, Finnegan says:

In many African cultures a feeling for language, for imagery and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clear in proverbs. The figurative quality of proverbs is especially striking; one of their most noticeable characteristic is their allusive wording, usually in metaphorical form, (Finnegan 1970: 390).

Though Finnegan does not refer specifically to Somali proverbs, it is possible to study the Kenyan Somali proverbs using her approach.
Achebe's (1958) 'Things Fall Apart', borrows heavily from oral materials, particularly the proverbs of the Ibo people of Nigeria. Achebe's works generally use proverbs in many ways. For example, he uses proverbs to summarize or make a statement. An example of this is: "If one finger brought oil it soiled the others" (Achebe, 1958:88).

More important for our study, however, is the way in which the author employs the proverb to resolve disputes among his characters. For example, when Okoye visits Onoka for payment of his loan, the issue is resolved through this proverb: "The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under it" (Achebe, 1958:6). This means, Onoka will settle his debts according to how much he owes his debtors, that is, pay those he owes more before paying off those he owes little.

Achebe also confirms our conviction that the proverb is a highly regarded art of conversation when he says "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe, 1958:5). Our study will benefit from Achebe's work; especially by drawing comparison from the way he has used proverbs to settle disputes.

Chesaina (1991) is a collection of the Kalenjin oral literature materials in which the author discusses the social context, form and function of oral literature in the Kalenjin community. Chesaina collected proverbs and made an attempt to analyse the social context and meaning of her collection of proverbs. The author tries to classify the proverbs of the community according to their functions and context and she suggests eleven different categories of proverbs.
One thing I noticed during my research is the astonishing similarities of the proverbs of the Kenyan Somalis and the Kalenjins. For example, like the Kalenjin community, many Somali proverbs are used in oral narratives usually as summaries of the morals of the stories. The other glaring similarity of the proverbs of these communities also lies in the functions of the proverbs and their meanings.

Chesaina’s work, though mainly a collection of oral materials with very little literary analysis, has bearing on our study mainly because of her view that proverbs are used to resolve conflicts. We especially concur with her when she says that meaning in proverbs is understood in particular context.

Wanjohi’s (2001) 'Under One Roof: Gikuyu Proverbs Consolidated' is another motivating book on the proverbs of the Kikuyu Community. The writer attempts to bring all the collections of the Gikuyu Proverbs that were written before him by different people at different times “under one roof”- in one book. The book which contains one thousand eight hundred and twenty one (1821) proverbs draws its collection mainly from books on Gikuyu Proverbs written by writers such as G. Barra, T. G. Benson, and Stanely K. Gathigira.

According to Wanjohi, he wrote this book in order to ease some of the difficulties that researchers of this discipline face when they want to analyse an already documented folklore material. He claims that many collections were written by various writers without taking time to look at what the previous collectors had done.
This, he argues resulted in many repetitions and made the research both monotonous and tedious.

Though this book is a mere collection of Gikuyu Proverbs with little literary analysis, it will help us during our research, especially in guiding us in the mode of collection, transcription and translation of the proverbs.

Ng'osos (1997) collected 142 Tugen proverbs, translated them into English and made an effort to give a detailed explanation of their phenomenology. He also gave an equivalent of English and Kiswahili proverbs where possible. The work concurs with the view that in African Societies, proverbs form an essential aspect of everyday conversation and convey messages difficult to achieve with ordinary words.

Ng'osos' book gives an insight into traditional Tugen wisdom and affirms that in African communities it is common for older people to talk in proverbs. The writer argues that proverbs are one reliable way of preserving and transmitting our cultural and traditional heritage. Among the Tugen community, proverbs are important because they summarize traditional wisdom and are tools of the old and wise men. Some of the applications of the Tugen proverbs, as suggested by Ng'osos include: giving advice to the youth and instilling patriotism and loyalty to the
community’s code of ethics. He also argues that other applications include: invoking a sense of responsibility and respect for others’ property and their leadership position.

Some proverbs in the book are used for conflict resolution. For example:

- Do not pursue one who has fled.
- Do not pour blood on another person’s tongue.

Proverb (i) calls for ceasefire in the sense that one should not pursue a defeated enemy, while proverb (ii) prohibits incitement.

Ng’osos’ work is mainly a collection of material with little literary analysis; nevertheless, this work is useful in our quest to unearth ways in which the Kenyan Somali proverbs are utilized to resolve clan conflicts.

Bukenya and Gachanja (1996) define a proverb as a short statement, which uses figurative language or word pictures to comment on a situation. The two authors acknowledge that African communities have large stocks of proverbs in their possession and that proverbs are part and parcel of the wider language of the community. They argue that proverbs accompany almost all African stories, conversation and formal speeches. They give an example of a Yoruba story where each event in the story is accompanied by a proverb. The work tells us that proverbs hold the attention of the audience through the use of words in a clever way.
This work, though meant for junior readers in high school will assist us to analyse the images used by the proverb and its (the proverb) role in stories and formal meetings.

Bukenya, Gachanja and Nandwa [1997] in ‘Oral Literature: A Senior Course’ makes a second attempt to discuss proverbs as an important genre of oral literature. The work, which is meant for the student at senior level in secondary schools, is basically an attempt to integrate the teaching of English language with literature and in the process discusses proverbs as an essential sub-genre of oral literature.

In their discussion, the writers agree that proverbs constitute the most widespread and most respected genre of African literature where every conversation is sprinkled with proverbs. The writers contend that “All serious political, judicial and religious discussions are conducted and often settled through proverbs and the person who knows how to quote an apt proverb is likely to come out the winner in any debate or arguments”. According to the three pioneers of research and teaching of oral literature in Kenya, proverbs are generally used in narratives, songs and poems. Quoting from Yuroba, they state: “proverbs are horse footed to solve problems. When the truth is elusive, it is the proverb that we use to discover it”. Bukenya and his colleagues state that proverbs use strong images drawn from various sources and the images are chosen according to their sound effects and the meaning and
allusions that they make. Though this work is meant for secondary schools, it is significant in guiding this study to expose the proverb as a conflict resolution tool.

Hassanalis and Kirmani’s (2002) focus on the oral literature of Indians, referred to as Asians in East Africa. The work, which takes cognizance of the cultural diversity among the various Indian communities, is an academic attempt to appreciate the values and traditions of the communities.

One genre of oral literature that the writers discuss is the proverb which they say is used for various social contexts: both formal and informal. According to these writers, proverbs use images and symbolism and, therefore, communicate deep messages and reveal a people’s psychology. They argue that proverbs are delivered spontaneously on the spur of the moment and are usually used by people skilled in language, especially the elderly. In complete agreement with our research opinion; the writers agree that proverbs are used to resolve conflict, praise the good deeds of the members of the community and give advice to the young ones. This work was useful to our research as we shared the notion that proverbs are used as catalysts to solve disputes.

Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) emphasize the importance of proverbs in African societies. Quoting from ‘Akan’ and ‘Dahomey’ communities, they state that the
proverb is the horse behind any meaningful conversation and because of its wisdom it is considered to be the mark of experience and oratorical accomplishment. The authors reveal that “most profound discussions and advice are conducted and delivered through proverbs. Therefore, they are the truisms through which disputes and judicial decisions in traditional societies are carried out”. The work defines a proverb as a terse, pithy statement containing folk wisdom. This study will affirm, as much as it benefits from the contention of this work that proverbs are employed to solve disputes.

Mukabi and Mutahi (1988) make an effort to define proverbs culturally, and discuss occasions when use of proverbs becomes a necessity. In their definition they say “proverbs are metaphorical statements that summarize a cultural context, event, a happening or an experience.” On the same note, the writers confirm that proverbs are used for serious business such as discussion on land issues, marriage contracts, legal proceedings and so on. The writers attest to the fact that proverbs are used to resolve conflicts. This is evident in some of the proverbs they collected and discussed. For example; “A warrior or brave person is brought down by a maize cob.” This is to warn the arrogant and powerful members that they can be defeated by the weak and the down-trodden. The proverb urges them to engage peaceful means in resolving their disputes. Mukabi and Mutahi’s work is useful as we discuss the cultural context and functions of the proverbs.
Akivaga and Odaga (1982) suggest how to carry out fieldwork and collect oral literature materials, especially proverbs. The writers define a proverb as a short saying of wisdom that communicates more deeply than ordinary language. They contend that proverbs occur very frequently in the speech of African peoples and their primary functions include teaching, cautioning and/or giving advice. The authors concur with the notion that proverbs use images liberally drawn mainly from the immediate environment and reveal people's conditions and philosophy of life. They further confirm that in Africa, people who know and use proverbs are highly respected. This work was intended to assist secondary school teachers and students who were involved in the teaching and learning of oral literature as an integrated subject. Though the text contains very little literary analysis, we borrowed the authors' suggestion that, to conduct field work, the researcher must involve the research community.

The Somali pioneers in research of oral literature also did a great deal of work. Mohamed Shire Mohammed (1974) collected 264 Somali proverbs. He also succeeded in getting the equivalents of each proverb in Arabic and English languages. Shire also gave a short explanation of the meaning and social context of each proverb. The most important aspect of this work is that it explains the difference between MAAHMAAH (proverb) and ORAAH (saying). He concludes that the difference is marked by the poetic nature of “Maahmaah” contrasted with
“Oraah” which is prosaic. Though all of the proverbs in the Somali version were
drawn from greater Somalia, we still found the work helpful in our analysis of the
functions and categorization of the Kenyan Somali proverbs.

Abdisalam Sheikh Hassan (2004) gives a historical insight of the Somali people and
the clan divisions. The writer tries to capture the features of the clan-based
Sultanate of the Somali people going as far back as the early 19th century to 1960,
when Somalia got its independence from British and Italian colonialists. The writer
also surveys the succession of the modern governments up to the time when
Somalia became stateless (1991) following the deposition of the late dictator Siad
Barre. In addition, the author concurrently discusses the main Somali clans and
their immense influence on the day to day affairs of the society. This work is
important for our discussion of the Kenya Somali social strata and clanism.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

While pointing out the limitations of some of the theoretical approaches to the study
of oral literature, Finnegan (1970) observes that oral literature and its study is a
complex and emotive undertaking, involving many conflicting assumptions. The
implication here is that each theoretical approach discusses only one aspect of oral
literature, so that a researcher of this subject cannot rely on a single approach. An
example is the psychoanalytical approach, which puts emphasis on the emotional
and psychological response to literature, while it says very little about the literary qualities. On the other hand, structuralism only concentrates on the structure of the system and relations between its elements ignoring the functions of these elements at the expense of defining the object. The social theories, for example, Pragmatics and discourse analysis talk only of the interactional purpose of literature. The historical-geographical theory tries to trace the exact historical and geographical origins of folklore and plot its journey from place to place. But the theory neglects the performer and the composer, whose roles are very important in folklore.

There are many theoretical approaches to the study of folklore, but after a long process of sifting through a wide spectrum of theoretical territories, this study adopts a composite approach combining Ethnopoetics and Semiotics Theories. These two-pronged approaches treat a text simultaneously as a linguistic utterance, a social artifact and an expressive act both reflecting and satisfying deeply-felt emotional needs.

1.7.1 Ethnopoetics

Ethno-poetics originated in America. It focuses on the aesthetics and poetic structuring of oral art. Its theoretical foundations and methodology lie in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, phenomenology, ethnomethodological conversation analysis and the ethnography of speaking and performance approach of American
folklore studies. (Anttonen 1994; 113). According to Anttonen, therefore, expressions are founded upon a socially constituted poetic structure that is presented both in the organization of experience as well as in the organization of the reports on that experience.

The exponents of Ethnopoetics are two well-known researchers of the folklore of the American Indians in particular and cultural studies in general, Dell Hymes (1982) and Dennis Tedlock (1983). The two theoreticians, however, advance their theory in two divergent but reconcilable ways.

1.7.1 Features of Ethnopoetics

We have noted above that Tedlock and Hymes advance their theoretical positions along different but reconcilable ways. For example, Dennis Tedlock insists on fieldwork through which the researcher finds opportunity to interact with the performer, who is the tradition carrier of the material. Through interaction with the informants, the researcher is able to identify details of performance including rises in voice, facial expressions, movements and gesture. He recognizes that it is through these body movements and voice manipulation that the artist is able to communicate his /her message. Tedlock also lays emphasis on organization of the performers’ speech into lines in accordance with the pauses in the performance.
This helps to mark punctuation in the performance itself, a feature that helps the audience to locate the artist’s areas of emphasis.

Whereas, Tedlock puts emphasis on fieldwork, Dell Hymes emphasizes working on already documented materials. His line of argumentation, as far as ethnopoetics is concerned is that close attention should be paid to the poetic texts themselves and the performer’s input. Features of style in the poetry are of significance to this theoretician. That is why even the length of lines, rhythmic patterns etc. are of great importance to this theoretician.

**Applying Ethno-Poetics to the Study of Kenyan Somali Proverb**

A casual look at the two strands of ethno-poetics as advanced by Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes may lead one to conclude that there is conflict in the two theories. However, on critical reflection on these strands, I realize that they provide a divergent interface to interrogate the message embodied in the Kenyan Somali proverb. There is, therefore, great potential to use the two approaches in the analysis of the Kenyan Somali proverbs.

For example, the line of discourse advanced by Tedlock is useful in the analysis of the performatory elements of the Somali proverb. I must emphasize that the proverbs were collected through fieldwork, a method that is advocated in Tedlock’s
lines of discourse. I have documented the proverbs and then analyzed them in terms of style and functions. This is where Dell Hymes approach becomes important. An enmeshing of the two seemingly opposing strands has, therefore, been a great asset in this analysis.

1.7.2 Semiotics

Semiotics refers to the “science of signs” that is, systematic codes of representation. The theory emanates from the quest by linguists and literary schoolers on how best a text can be interpreted. As explained by Robert Scholes in his book; ‘Semiotics and Interpretation’ (1991) there were initially some opposing critical schools. One of them was Author-oriented criticism whose concept of interpretation privileged the author/composer of the text and argues that the composer’s intention is the key to the meaning of the text. The principal advocate for this approach was Hirsch. A critical school, at the other extreme was Reader-oriented Criticism which emphasizes the reader’s response to the text. The proponents of this school argue that readers/listeners/audiences make right meaning from the text. Then there emerged from American: ‘The New Criticism’ which rejected the concepts of the two schools above and offered “an exercise of textual ingenuity”. Later on, the interpretive strategies moved emphasis from textual to the codes that govern the production of texts. The emphasis on codes even became dearer to the followers of the
structuralists of Russian Formalism and paved the way for the emergence of the Semiotic Theory. Explaining this development schools says:

Emphasis on codes is even more pronounced in the Structuralist Descendants of Russian Formalism, and has led in many structuralists to a privileging of those texts that are obviously dominated by codes and conventions.....The Formalist and Structuralist emphasis on codes has led to the development of a Semiotic Approach to literary study (Sholes, 1991:12/13)

Semiotics views language as a process of signification. Signification, according to Ferdinand de Saussure's conception of the sign consists of two inseparable aspects, the signifier and the signified. Saussure argues that a word or image (the sign) comes in two parts: the sound it makes, the (signifier) and the mental image that the sound produces in the reader/viewer, the signified.

The concept in Semiotics is that language does not operate through signs, but through codes. According to Semioticians all intelligibility depends upon codes. When we "make sense" of an event it is because we possess a system of thought, a code, that enables us to do so. According to the proponents of this theory, the texts are, therefore, evaluated as complex signification processes inscribed with codes.

Contemporary Semiotics theoreticians include Jackabson, Robert Scholes and Ronald Barthes who in his 'Elements of Semiology' (1964) translated from French expounds on the language (langue) and speech in Semiotics. These theoreticians all start from the basic premise that, whatever else a literary text may claim to be or
not to do, first and foremost a sample of language use. They propose, therefore, that the most logical starting point in the study of literary text is its management and deployment of linguistic resources at the performer’s disposal. This study adheres to this proposition in its exploration of the Kenyan Somali proverb, as may be seen in chapters four and five.

The basic tenet of this theory may be shared with the Sociological literary interpretation is that texts are the products of specific social contexts and they are consumed in specific context. It follows, therefore, that adequate interpretation of texts must take into account the social circumstances in which they are created and received. This is strongly underlined by this researcher’s field experience of the Kenyan Somali proverb context.

To be more specific this time and following the suggestion of Scholes that local researchers need to acquire the interpretive codes of their culture so that they can appreciate the texts, I have used Semiotics theoretical approach to interpret performance of the proverb, especially gestures (non-verbal elements) and visual aspects.

1.8 Research Methodology

In a cultural study like this one, the researcher depends on the community for the texts to be studied and analyzed. In such studies, the researcher cannot afford the
luxury of being an armchair scholar. He / she must be an active participant in the performances as well as clan mediations. This, therefore, calls for methods that are people oriented. The following were the methods followed:

1.8.1 Library Research
This was a general data collecting strategy that I used for a number of reasons: firstly, data was needed for building the theory that I used in the study. This called for a close reading of what has been done around the theory of ethnopoetics. Also, I needed data to support statements I made in this study. This called for wide reading of material on the proverb in general and conflict resolution in particular.

In view of the foregoing, I undertook library research at the Kenyatta University Library, Literature Department Resource Centre at Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi Library, Kenya National Library at Garissa, Kenya National Archives, American Cultural Centre in Nairobi, Kenya National Museum in Nairobi. Documents like journals, relevant magazines, relevant newspapers, and so on, were critically read and analyzed to add evidence to my argument in the thesis. In addition, I watched documentaries on conflict resolution among the Maasai of Kenya at the National Museums of Kenya. The purpose was to see how different or similar this practice is to that of the Kenyan Somali. I also purchased books from street vendors - those were books on Somali culture that are sold on streets in Eastleigh. I purchased books on the proverb and theory from bookshops. These were
books and journals that are not readily available in libraries, archives and at the museum.

1.8.2 Field Research
This being a culturally based study, there must be a heavy leaning on field work as is advocated by Dennis Tedlock whose theoretical ideas guided this work. During fieldwork, many activities took place. Foremost was my active participation in peace negotiations where live performances of the proverb were recorded. I intended to attend as many peace negotiations as possible during the course of my fieldwork. However, I only managed to attend five such negotiations. This offered me an opportunity to see, record and analyze a variety of performances in different contexts. Combinations of random and purposive sampling techniques were used to get these performance events. Since I am an adult member of this community and know the rules governing such negotiations, I from time to time, got actively involved in the negotiations.

Effort was also made to video-record the proceedings. This was for the purpose of keeping a record of the performances and this helped in the analysis as I went back on the recorded materials to confirm certain movements, gestures and even tonal variations. I was aware that video records may scare the performers. I was also aware that the audience may be scared even more so when the recording is done by strangers. That was why, to minimize the effect of such gadgets on performers, I
operated them myself, or gave them to trained assistants from different clans to operate them. Since these were not strangers, they were more easily accepted. This task was made even easier by the fact that there are only six clans among the Kenyan Somalis. I hired and trained six assistants one from each clan. This was necessary to forestall suspicion of partiality.

To be sure that most of the elements in a performance context are collected, I also used pen and paper to document. This greatly supplemented whatever details I had recorded on video. I also imagined there was always a chance that video recorded materials could be damaged because of heat, rain and so on. In the event of such a situation, the material recorded through writing would have become handy.

To gain insight into why and how the proverbs are used in peace negotiations, I interviewed 32 elderly men, from different main clans. I arrived at the number 32 in view of time and resource constraints. Since these opinion leaders were from the different clans that make up the Somali community of North Eastern, I realized their views represented the views of the majority in the six different clans. These opinion leaders were well known and, therefore, I used purposive sampling technique to get them.
Women are not involved in peace negotiations in this community. However, my knowledge of this community revealed that women also know the proverbs that are used in such peace negotiation meetings. In fact they utter these proverbs in their own informal settings. For the purpose of this study, I interviewed two women who were considered opinion leaders from each of the six main clans. From their views, I got a wholesome interpretation of the proverb as a conflict resolution tool. The basic argument that guided the decision to include the views of the women, even though they are not directly involved in peace negotiations, was that women are actually the real force behind the peace negotiations. The ideas of the women are carried by the men to the negotiations. It was imperative, therefore, that I get first hand information from the women concerning the proverb as a peace negotiating tool.

I reached women through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. I initially interviewed one woman who in turn led me to the next. This process continued until I arrived at the figure twelve (12), representing two women from each clan. Like the male opinion leaders, the twelve women opinion leaders represented well the views of the other women in the six main clans.

1.8.3 Material Analyzed
The whole corpus of material collected during fieldwork comprised 144 proverbs. Out of these, one hundred and one [101] proverbs were analyzed in detail in this study as a basis of and illustration of our arguments. The one hundred and one
proverbs were selected using purposive sampling technique. They were chosen specifically on the basis of how best their message suited the topic under discussion. The one hundred and one proverbs were deemed a sufficient sample for this study because they represent adequately the principles of peace negotiations in this community. They are in essence a good representative of the other proverbs of the Kenyan Somali community.

1.8.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation
I first transcribed all the texts collected. These texts were then translated into English. After this, a thorough analysis of the proverbs were undertaken in order to understand the performance details, their language and functions.

After the analysis, the chapters were presented to the opinion leaders and some other members of the community who were knowledgeable in Somali Culture for authentication. Presentation of research findings to the cultural experts of community where the research was based is of late becoming an important element of cultural analysis of which this study is a part (see Alembi 2002). Purposive sampling technique was used to get these experts.

1.8.5 Data Presentation
Materials in this thesis are presented in form of statements, maps, figures and photographs. Such a presentation was deemed necessary because it enhances the understanding of content by the reader. As there was a strong component of
performance in this study, it is deemed necessary that photographs of the performance of the proverb should accompany the thesis. This is particularly useful as it gives the readers an opportunity to watch the performances to appreciate how conflict resolution is done by use of this verbal art.

One major challenge was scarcity of reference material. As we noted earlier, literature in this field is limited and the researcher had to exploit every minute details about the proverb.

1.8.6 Challenges during Research and Thesis Writing

Despite the limitations, however, it was a joy for me to conduct my research among the Kenyan Somalis in Garissa, Ijara, Wajir and Mandera. What motivated me even more to undertake this research was the great cooperation I got from the community where the research was based. They honestly and happily gave all the information they could find. Some respondents even brought me relevant resource material all the way from Mogadishu. Through the community support I was, therefore, able to collect sufficient data and do the analysis. I am proud to present herein the results of my research.
CHAPTER TWO
The Research Community

2.1 Introduction

The chapter tackles objective (i) of the study by discussing the sociological aspects of the Kenyan Somali Community. It also presents folklore material based on ethnopoetic perspective. The aim here is to establish who are the Kenyan Somali? Where are they from? And so on, not from historical perspective, but according to their mythology. Material presented is gathered from the field and mainly from the respondents in my interviews. In this chapter, I discuss: the physical location, ethnic background, social groups, the occupation and economy and causes and indicators of conflicts among the Kenyan Somali in North Eastern Province. I also discuss other genres of oral literature such as the poems, narratives, riddles and tongue twisters. There are always close ties between the various genres of oral literature, therefore, in my view, this discussion is necessary for us to understand these forms alongside the proverb. I begin my discussion by looking at the physical and climatic conditions of North Eastern Province which is the site of this study.

2.2 Physical Location

The Kenyan Somalis are concentrated in North Eastern province of Kenya. The 1998 population census estimated the community to number roughly one million.
NORTH EASTERN PROVINCE CLANS SETTLEMENTS
North Eastern province is the second largest province in Kenya. It is dry and hot: temperatures sometimes rise to plus 40°C and the rainfall is erratic and unreliable. The estimated annual rainfall is 400mm and this comes during the rainy seasons of Gu’ (spring) and Dayr (summer), which fall in the months of April – June and October – December respectively. The other two seasons are Hagaa (winter) which is cold and windy in the months of July – September and Jilaal (autumn) which is hot and dry and comes between January – March. The winter and the autumn are usually the seasons of great hardship and famine. The community knows this and members are urged to bear the brunt of these hard seasons as the seasons of plenty will definitely come and the hard ones will pass. So these months are silently counted to pass. This is reflected in the community’s folklore, particularly in the proverb. It is, for example, said:

1. “Wax la tiriyyey, taag ma leh.”

(Anything counted, will never persist)

According to Jigre Mohamed interviewed on 17TH November, 2005, the proverb means when someone counts days as they pass him/her because he/she is waiting for something promised, he/she will find time passing swiftly. The proverb urges members to persevere. In other words, the severe season will be counted off in terms of months and it would be replaced by a better season of plenty. The community is encouraged to be patient as bad months come and go.
On the other hand, during the rainy seasons, when there is green pasture everywhere, community members are reminded that this will end soon and there after will follow the dry and hardship season, and so they should be prepared. For example, elders say during the seasons of plenty.

2. “Lama huraan, waa caws jiilaal.”

(The inevitable is the dry grass of the hot and dry season of autumn).

The meaning of the proveb, as given by Aden Ibrahim interviewed on 10th August, 2005, is that, wealth is sometimes temporary and is replaced by poverty. In this case the seasons of plenty (summer and spring) where there is green grass will be replaced by the dry and hardship seasons (winter and autumn) where the grass will be withered.

North Eastern province is bordered to the north by Ethiopia, to the west by Eastern Province, to the east by the Somali Republic, and to the south by the Coast Province. The province sits on an estimated area of 129,902 km² and many parts are either rocky mountains or barren plains with only ephemeral vegetation cover after rainfall.

The province is one of the poorest and most neglected in the Republic of Kenya. The infrastructure is dilapidated, particularly the communication network. There is no
single tarmac road in the province and most of the roads become impassable during the rainy seasons, effectively cutting off some divisions for as many as three months from the main towns of Garissa, Wajir and Mandera.

All social amenities including water, electricity, telephone service among others are all scarce and only concentrated in the main towns. The province is also disadvantaged in terms of education. School enrollment is very low and more than 60% of school age children do not enroll and many others, especially girls, drop out before they reach standard eight[DEO, Garissa report].

The community is optimistic about its future as reflected in its artistic expressions. It seems they believe that someone will one day take them to the Promised Land. The community is constantly urged to persevere and face the challenges of the harsh environment. The following proverb is to the point:

3. “Nin samara, sad, ma waayo”.

(A patient person never misses his share).

I was told by Hassan Ahmed who I interviewed on 3rd December, 2005 that the proverb means whoever is patient with the challenges of life, God is there to assist him/her by giving him/her his/her rightful share of livelihood.
The North Eastern Province is, however, rich in livestock. The province daily exports a large number of cattle, goats, sheep and camels to the other provinces.

2.3. Ethnic Background

The Somali people are spread in Somalia, Northern Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia. Ethnographers classify the Somalis as Cushitic; these people have close cultural, linguistic and even physical resemblance with the people known as the Oromo, Borana, Saho, Bejo, Afar and Rendille who live in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya.

The Kenyan Somalis belong to this larger Somali population and in fact they seem to cherish that. Sometimes in the past the Kenyan Somalis longed to secede from Kenya and join their brothers and sisters in the Somali republic under the banner of what was known as the Greater Somalia – an ambitious approach to unite all the Somalis under one flag and state. For example, shortly before Kenya’s independence on 11th November, 1963 the Kenyan Somalis formed the then infamous Northern Frontier District Liberation Front (NFDLF) locally branded as the shiftah. It was an armed struggle against the then young Kenyan government and the aim was to secede and join the Somali Republic which attained its independence from the Italian and British colonialists in 1960. The love for unity and unification and the need to struggle against the perceived oppressors all the time is portrayed by the
community’s folklore, especially the proverbs. For example, the proverbs below speak of the need for freedom and unity.

4. “Gunnimo, geeri baa dhaanta”.
“(Death is better than slavery).”

5. “Tolkaa xaar buu ku cunsiiyaa”.
(Your kinsmen can make you feed on faeces).

6. “Far keliyhi, fool ma mayrto”.
(One finger alone cannot wash a face).

The meanings of the proverbs were given by Aden Osman, who was interviewed on 11th December, 2005. According to him, the first proverb means, instead of one accepting oppression timidly, he/she should fight and die for his/her freedom. The second proverb means the clan’s interest always comes before that of a member. In other words, the clan can coarse one to do what the clan wants. The meaning of the third proverb is that a united people can do better than an individual.

2.4. African –Arabian Claim

Although the Somali people, from a careful observation of their culture, world view and even their physical appearance are more African than Arab, they, however, claim to have both African and Arab origins.
According to Somali myths of origin, the great grandfather of the Somali clans came from the Arabian Peninsula and got married to an African woman. For example, the Darood clan believes that the father of the clan was an Arabian Sheikh (an expert of Islamic religion) who came into Somali land or the north eastern Somalia by boat. Having no prior knowledge of the land he got lost in the bush and slept in trees. Darood, being a saint, was fed by the Almighty Allah on that tree where he was praying fervently that God may offer him His mercy and guidance. Darood was oblivious of the fact that around and near him there were Africans herding their animals in the bush. Among these folk was a girl by the name Doonbira who had not been married because of her ugliness. She was almost becoming old maid and the people had started calling her “Gumeys,” a derogatory name for a spinster. By a stroke of good luck, however, as she was herding her family’s goats stumbled upon the hideout of Mr. Darood. In fact the legend says that he was the one who saw her first and started shaking the branches of the acacia tree that was his home and ‘Abga’ (seeds of the tree) started falling down and the animals scrambled for them. Doonbira looked up to find out who was shaking the tree only to see a young, slender, white figure of human being gazing at her from the top of the tree. First day she ran away but later they fell in love and got married. Thus the Darood clan, which is the most populous, claims that it is the offspring of an Arab father and African mother. The other major clans also claim the same.
The Somali claim of Arabian descent could mainly be interpreted in two ways: the first one is that historically the Somalis have close commercial ties with Arab merchants. There were also inter-marital relationship between the Arabs and the Somalis, where many Arab sheikhs came to Somalia and married the Somalis particularly in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries (Abdisalan, 2004).

This has brought about an adoption of many Arab cultural practices and the feeling that Arabs are good people worth to be emulated. It is not, therefore, surprising to find many Somalis adopting Arabian names and some light-skinned people given the name “Arab”.

Secondly, Somalis got the Islamic Religion through these Arab merchants and missionaries. The conversion to Islam made them associate ‘Arabness’ with ‘Holiness’ thus being able to claim Arab ancestry suggests that one is closer to Prophet Mohamed, who was himself an Arab.

2.5. Migration

The Somali community, being pastoralist, was historically characterized by a series of migratory movements across a vast and expansive land in eastern part of Kenya and the Horn of Africa. The aim of the continuous migration was not for the purpose
of exploration or discovery of new knowledge but purely in search of green pasture and water. The Somalis cherish new grazing land, which has not been grazed for a number of years. According to Bilow Dabar [interviewed on 29th July, 2005] this kind of land is locally called “Cosob” and one has to graze his animals there whatever the cost. Proverbs urge the pastoralists to take their livestock to the ‘Cosob’ area and graze them or suffer the consequence! See the following proverb;

7. “Ama cosob daaq, ama caymo waa”.
(Graze your animal in ‘Cosob’ or brace yourself for poverty).

Farah Ali interviewed on 20th November, 2005, told me that the proverb means one should go for the best way of earning his livelihood. The hidden meaning is also that one should defend his/her source of income.

According to the interviews I had with the elders, the Kenya Somalis migrated from Somalia and Ethiopia, to North Eastern province of Kenya at around the late 19th century. The members of Darood clan migrated from the Ogadan region of Ethiopia, while the members of other clans, majority of them being Hawiye Clan, migrated both from Somalia and Ethiopia.

Mzee Aden Omar, an elder and a member of Darood clan [interviewed on 16th August 2005] told me the Daarood migration from Ethiopia was led by Sultan Abdi
Ibrahim, known for his bravery and leadership qualities. The elder showed me the grave of the first man of Daarood clan to die in North Eastern Province as they clashed with the Wardeys along the Tana River. The emigrant Daaroods had a series of clashes with the Wardeys, Boranas, Rendille and Samburu until they conquered the whole of Garissa District and part of Ijara, Wajir and Isiolo.

However, the Darood clan suffered defeat and was beaten back to Garissa District from Isiolo District by the combined forces of Samburu, Rendille and Boranas who killed Sultan Abdi Ibrahim in a battle at what is today known as Bur Balaya (The Mountain of Catastrophe) near Isiolo town.

Internal migrations within the North Eastern province for the quest of new (Cosob) grazing land, however, continued. This resulted into many clashes within Daarood sub-clans. Some vividly remembered series of clashes were the ones between the Abuduwak and Mohamed Zuber sub-clans of the Daarood. The clashes started because of the populous Mohamed Zubers wanting to dislodge the minority Abuduwak clan from the grazing land around the banks of River Tana. The clashes came to a halt when the Sultan of the Mohamed Zuber was killed in a battlefield near Habaswein town today known as “Kalalut” (staggering apart). The clashes were so brutal that even children and women were not spared despite the fact that killing human beings is against the teachings of the Islamic religion. It is said that during
this particular clash, young children learning the Holy Quran in a traditional school known as “Dugsi” were massacred.

Somalis do often forget or ignore the teaching of Islam against killing when it comes to vengeance or in defending their “Cosob” land. One is bound by communal obligation to defend the grazing land regardless of any risk. Evidence in their oral culture, particularly proverbs attests to this fact. A proverb, for example, says:

8. “Nin Tolkii kama Janno tago”.

(A man may miss paradise because of his clan).

Ahmed Sheikh interviewed on 31st July, 2005 says that the proverb means a man should sacrifice for his clan by undertaking all that the clan wants him to undertake even if that means disobeying God. In other words, one is asked to put the welfare of the clan ahead of other interests—even if such interests are religious.

The migration and particularly the intrusion of the Kenyan Somalis into the grazing lands of the other communities was effectively noted by the British colonial powers who demarcated for each clan and sub-clan a certain grazing area known as “Zera”. The created boundaries came with some stringent rules that anybody who trespassed with his animals to the other side would pay huge fines or his animals would be confiscated by the British. This restrained the nomads. The issue of inter-
Ian clashes, however, still continues to date and the elders’ frantic efforts to get an
amicable solution through artistic expression also continues.

Although the Kenyan Somali pastoralists even today graze their animals in parts of
Eastern and Coast provinces and sometimes invade the national parks, especially
during the drought, the current migrations are, however, different from the previous
ones. Today the migration is not for the purpose of acquiring new grazing land but
just to save the animals from the devastating effects of drought.

The Kenyan Somalis co-exist with other communities peacefully and even make
attempts to accommodate some of the cultural practices of the host communities. It
seems the community has now learnt to implement some of the positive teachings of
their proverbs such as the following:

9. “Dhajiba dhulkuu jooguu, dhogortiiisa leeyahay”.
   (Every snake looks like the environment it lives in).

According to Sheikh Garad interviewed on 11th July, 2005 the proverb urges that
one should behave the way his host behaves, reminiscent of the English saying
"If you go to Rome, do as the Romans do’
2.6. The Kenyan Somali Social Strata

2.6.1. Clan System

The most conspicuous aspect of Somali social organization is the clan system. Every member of Somali community belongs to an easily identifiable clan kinship traced through patriarchal descent.

The clan starts from the person and builds up a genealogical descent which every member of the community is compelled to learn by heart. For example, at birth the child gets a personal name and then takes the first name of his/her father. After that, at a very tender age the child is expected to be able to recount his/her genealogies back through several generations to the clan ancestor.

The Somali community as a whole has six main clans. These are the Daarood, the Dir, the Issack, the Hawiye, the Digil and the Mirifle. Each of these clans, however, has numerous sub-clans or units (see charts 1, 2 and 3 below).
Chart 1: (The Hawiye main clan and its sub-clans)

HAWIYE

Karimle  Xaskul  Gugundhabe  Jambeel  Gorgaate

Murursade

Sabti  Fooxcus

Murale  Baadicade  Jajeele  Jidle  Saransoor

Hiraab

Mudulood  Sheekhaal  Habar Gedir  Duduble

Abgaal  Udaajeen  Wacdaan  Moobleen

Sacad  Cayr  Saleebsaan  Saruur

Source: Abdisalan: 2004
Chart 2: (The Daarod main clan and its sub-clans)
(Source: Abdisalan: 2004)
Chart 3: (The Digil and Mirifle main clan and its sub-clans)

Digil iyo MIRIFLE

Digil

Eeg boga ku xiga

Mirifle

Sideed

Sagaal

Xariin

Leysaan

Jirroon

Hubeer

Yantaar

Hadam

Eyle

Digil

Tuni

Galadi

Garre

Dabarre

Jiido

Bagadi

Shanta

Caleemood

(Source: Abdisalan: 2004)
The Kenyan Somalis mainly belong to the Daarood, the Hawiye and the Digil clans. There is a clear distribution of settlements for these clans in the North Eastern province. The Daaroods, for example, are concentrated in Garissa and Ijara districts and part of Wajir districts, while the Hawiye are also found in Wajir and Mandera. The Digil who mainly consist of the Garre sub-clan are entirely based in Mandera district.

A Clan among the Somali people is like a co-operative group that is bound together by a common interest. In fact, a member of the clan needs and depends upon his/her clan for various reasons. The first one is for security. One needs to be protected as he grazes and waters his animals. Even if one's clan is not found in that area one should be under the protection of the major clan in the area and would be known as “Sheegad,” meaning that he would be treated as a member of the clan and is given all due respect and protection temporarily.

The second one is for financial assistance. When one loses one’s animals to drought, he assumes the name Cayr (Pauper) and is in need of what is known as Caymo – a collective kitty from his clan to rescue or bail him out of the disaster. It all starts in the form of a little donation of milk in the morning known as Hirsi from the clan members as the camels are being milked to a real fundraising of every member of the clan donating an Ishkin – a camel or a head of cattle towards the kitty.
Another time when a member needs or relies on his clan for financial assistance is when he is to pay blood compensation as a result of killing a member of another clan. The compensation, known as Mag, is paid to the clan of the deceased. This is particularly seen as a collective responsibility and no member can dare refuse payment.

The importance of the clan system among the Somalis, and the need to belong to one is recognized by the community’s proverb. A proverb, for example, stresses:

10. "Tolkaa iyo talaba, waa loo baahan yahay".

(A clan and a piece of advice are always needed).

The meaning of the proverb, according to Saman Ali interviewed on 13th December, 2005 is that one always needs the clan and the advice it offers.

The third requirement for a Somali to belong to a clan is for governance. Every clan or sub-clan or even smaller units known as Jilib or Jibsin has its own council of elders who govern the clan. For one to be among the people governed or even a member of the governing council one has to belong to a certain clan.
2.6.2. The Council of Elders

One notable social organ among the Somalis in general and the Kenyan Somalis in particular, is the council of elders known as Duqay. This is a traditional council which is loosely elected and led by an elder known as the Sultan. The council is mandated to discuss and deliberate upon all issues affecting the clan. It is especially and purposely created to solve disputes among the members of the clan and negotiate with other elders of other clans in the event of a conflict between the two clans. The members of the council of elders are chosen on the basis of age, knowledge of the religion (Islam), wealth (the one with more camels or cattle) and their oratory skills. An elder who can use proverbs abundantly, can narrate the past historical events, and be able to quote from poems of the well known poets of clan has the best chance of being a member of the council.

The council strictly follows the clan constitution known as the clan constitution or the Heer: a combination of a secular customary law made by the clan ancestors and the Islamic Sheriah or law. When, for example, it comes to marriage, inheritance, blood compensation and similar issues, it is the Sheria that prevails. But when it comes to rape cases, marrying of a widow by a man other than the one meant to inherit her- the brother of the deceased or such, it’s the customary laws of the clan that apply. The council of elders also represents all members of the clan when it
comes to negotiating with other clans and might sign (Verbal agreement) a truce with the other clan on behalf of their clan.

The deliberations and the verdict of any judgment made by the council is done under a shady, large tree known as Geedka (the tree), which acts as the local court room. Any issue discussed and passed by the elders under the tree is final and not questionable. People usually have trust in that court (the tree) and always postpone debating issues till they come to the “tree”. Proverbs reveal this trust. The following proverb, for example, not only urges people to be patient until issues affecting them are brought to the “tree” and debated, but stresses the need for members of the clan to just regard any issue that has not come to the “tree” as mere rumours and baseless:

11. “War jiraba, cakaaruu imman”.

(Any real issue will come to Cakaare).

As told by Dekow Ali, interviewed on 11th November, 2005, the proverb is used to dispel unfounded rumours and it advises people to ignore rumours until such (rumours) come true by coming to the “tree”.

N.B. Note that “cakaare” is another name for the “Tree”- the local court.
2.6.3 The Imams/Sheikhs

Another social group that has a big influence in the life of the Somalis is the Imams or Sheikhs. Although as I said earlier, the clan customary laws or the "Heer" supplements the Islamic Sheriaah law, many social aspects have direct reference to the Islamic teaching and are the sole domain of the Imams. When it comes to marriage, for example, it is the Khadi or his representative who ties the knot and pronounces the amount of the marriage contract (as approved by the bride) which is usually four cows payable to the bride on the spot or later if agreed.

Also during the exercise of inheriting from the deceased, it is the Imam who divides the property left by the dead among his or her offspring and relatives. The Imams, in this particular task of dividing the property, would follow and subscribe to the teachings of the Holy Quran to the letter. This also needs knowledge of mathematics because it involves fractions which the Imams master. For example, some members of the family of the deceased are prescribed to get a third of the property while others may get only a sixth or an eighth of it. A female member of a bereaved family, for example, is supposed to get half of what a male member gets.

The religious leaders or Imams are aware and accept the influence of the Heer, the clan customary laws, to the social life and, in fact, when there is a conflict of the Sheriaah and the customary law, they often allow the later to prevail. My own father, Muktar Haji, who is also an elder of the Yahye sub-clan, told me during my
interview with him that he heard from his father (my grand father) that the Heer Aji — wider customary laws for all Somali clans, were approved by the religious leaders of the time when it was established. He [Muktar] said, as the representatives of all the clans were meeting under a tree to make the Heer, the Imams were also kept in a nearby tree. So, whenever an article was agreed upon it was presented to the Imams or the Ulamaa, as often called, to authenticate and particularly check its difference with the Sheriah. That way, the old man told me, the Heer Aji was harmonized with the Islamic Sheriah.

The religious leaders wield immense powers among the Kenyan Somali community, not because they have the power to govern and punish culprits, but because of their perceived sainthood and holiness. People believe that if you wrong the religious leaders and they look at you pitifully you will suffer misfortune. You might, for example, lose your camels, sons or both. The perceived miraculous powers of the Sheikhs stem from the fact that these men are men of Allah. They carry the Holy Quran in their hearts, teach and practice it the way God ordained them to do. So, definitively, Allah would answer their prayers and hence one has to be cautious when dealing with them.

The well known Sheikhs, for example, assemble a flock of religious students known as Hir around their hamlet and teach them the translation of the Holy Quran and
the traditions of the prophets. Of course the student population sometimes swells to forty or fifty and becomes beyond one man’s ability to feed and cater for. On many occasions, therefore, the Imam depends on external donors. The donors are people who come to the hamlet carrying mostly goats, sheep or cattle and want to exchange their gift with prayers from the Imam and his Hir. The visit from donors is known as 2vara and the visitor always receives a good reception and he/she is often put in a circle made by the Sheikh and his Hir and verses of Quran are cited for him/her.

When the much needed visitors are sometimes not forthcoming, the Imam and his Hir might decide to go and make a visit to another hamlet or a number of families that are temporarily settled together. The protocol and steps to be followed when making such a visit are very clear. The Imam/Sheikh and sometimes the entire Hir put on their Islamic attire – the Khamis (Kanzu), the Imamah (the top cover- usually white in colour) and the Sunnah (the hat). They walk in two lines in which every two people walk side by side holding the arms of one another and keeping a distance of roughly three metres from their friends at the back and front.

When they reach within sight of their would-be host, they stop, make a half circle as they stand and sing a religious song known as Tawasal. Thereafter the host is compelled to welcome them. They camp somewhere near his collapsible huts and he
slaughters a big ram or two and in turn they would pray for him and the host would give them something in the following morning.

The subliminal fear for a catastrophe in the event of the sheikh/Imams being mistreated is portrayed by proverbs. An elder might, for example, use the following proverb when he thinks the sheikhs were not treated well in accordance to the social customs;

12. "Il Geedka Dhabi, ma Argto

(An eye cannot detect the thorn that pierces it)

The meaning of the proverb is given to me by Harira Ali interviewed on 14/7/05 and it says that though the eye is entrusted to see any danger coming to the rest of the body, sometimes the eye itself fails to detect the thorn that comes to harm it. The eye’s weakness symbolizes the entire human folly. In view of this, any member of the community who does not treat the Ulama respectfully and generously is not wise and the consequences may be devastating.

2.6.4 Women

Women among the Kenyan Somalis form an important social group with clearly defined roles. The first role of the Kenyan Somali women is to bring up the children. They, for example, breastfeed, carry the baby on the back for a long distance as the
pastoralist nomads wander from place to place in the bush in search of water and pastures. It is the duty of women also to cook for the family, wash clothes and fetch water for the family either on her back or taking a caravan of burden-camels known as Daan to the water points and fill the wooden containers locally known as Haan with water, load them on the camels and bring them home. Women do also herd animals like goats, sheep and it is their responsibility to weave the mats such as the Duful, Kabet and the Gelo that make up the make-shift houses of the pastoralist nomads known as Aqal-heeryo.

Despite these important roles that women play in the society, the Kenyan Somali women are seriously discriminated against and their rights always violated by their male counterparts. Women in this community, for example, have no say in many issues affecting their lives. Decisions are made on their behalf by men and they cannot question or try to oppose them. During marriage negotiations, for example, women are not involved. Both the mother-in-law and the bride to-be are merely informed of the decision taken and who they may relate to as a suitor. The mother-in-law is also formally advised by her husband and his kinsmen to take her meager share of the dowry and start weaving the Aqal Heeryo for her daughter. Marriage among the Kenyan Somalis is a clan affair. The suitor is often compelled to see all the close relatives of the father-in-law, pay them dowry and beg for hand for marriage of their daughter.
In the marriage negotiations, for example, one would hear negotiators often referring
to the following proverbs:

13. “Naag tol baa Guursadaa, ninna way u galbataa
(A woman is married by a clan, but goes home to her husband.)

According to Halima Aden interviewed on 4th December, 2005 the proverb means
that marriage, according to Somalis, is a communal issue, therefore, a wife, other
than her husband, is responsible and is required by the community to welcome her
in-laws.

2.6.5 How a Somali marriage is conducted

Marriage, in the Somali view, is a union of two people of opposite sex who have
agreed, in the presence of Khadi and two witnesses, that they will live together as
husband and wife or separate amicably if it becomes necessary. Marriage is
attached with great importance because it is seen as the turning point of the
individual’s life. The married person is respected and entrusted more with clan
affairs compared with the unmarried. At both the clan and the family level, the
young people are expected to marry as early as possible. Young girls are even
married off (sometimes forcefully) at the age of fourteen, while the young men are
expected to marry before they are twenty one.
When there is a general feeling among the family members that a young man needs to marry, the search for a suitable bride starts. The search for the bride initially covers the sub-clan and if there is no beautiful girl in the sub-clan, then the search is extended to the wider clan. When there is consensus among the family that a girl suitable for marriage has been identified, consultations start. The father of the bride-to-be slaughters a goat and calls members of the extended family for consultation. A decision is made and verses from the Holy Quran are read. This process is known as faataxa mar, meaning "praying for the best". The following morning, the father and two of his kinsmen visit the family of the bride. With them they take some money, sugar and tea leaves. They meet with the father of the bride and propose the marriage. This first encounter of the two relatives is called Tuug literally meaning "begging". The father of the bride receives the visitors warmly but he is at liberty to accept or reject the proposal. If he accepts, he tells them to see the mother of the bride and the closest relatives. To "see" means to ask for the hand of the girl for marriage and give them some token though this is just a formality as the power to reject or accept the marriage proposal entirely rests with the father. There are usually three to four similar visits to the family of the bride before the wedding. In the follow up visits, however, it is only the father and the mother of the bride who receive some payments. The last visit is called Dhibgeys, which roughly means "pass us on". This is the time when the two families officially set the day of the wedding. Weddings are usually set for Saturdays and Sundays i.e. the process is started on Saturday and is concluded on Sunday. It is believed that Saturday and
Sunday are the days when God created the universe. So, it is believed that a new family created on these days will prosper.

Before the wedding day comes, the roles of the two families, especially the two Mother-in-laws have the duty to weave the make-shift house for the proposed family. The mother of the bride weaves all parts of the house except two. Her duties include preparing the Heerya (Thatched - grass mats), Haamo (Wooden vesels), Gambar (Stool), Ameelo (milking vessel), Xarqo (ropes), Kur (wooden plates), Sandhaal (spoons), Kabaallo (Beddings) and others. The mother of the bridegroom or her family is expected to bring the Alool (Bed).

A day before the wedding day, two old men from the family of the bridegroom is dispatched to the family of the bride to survey the site where the new house is to be put up. The site is usually a place not very far from the house of the mother of the bride. This, however, does not mean Somalis are matrilineal. The house is temporarily built there and the bridegroom actually moves with his new wife and joins his father’s homestead after roughly three months. Then, on Saturday, as agreed earlier, the organization of the wedding starts. A caravan of burden-camels usually consisting five camels carrying food items and poles for the construction of the house reach the wedding site before sunset. On approaching the site the relatives of the bridegroom sing the following song:-
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2
Hiraabkooy dhacaan nahayee
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2
Wiilka wuu duulay, oo dibaduhuu tagay
Oo dhulkuu dahab ku daadiyey
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2
Boorrey raratooy, baatir maashooy
Biloy baahi kaa dheer
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2
Waa bil iyo xiddig, waa baarigaaynoow
Berri baa baalwac leh loo xiri
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2
Faal gurey qaatoow, cadowga fuliyow
Wax lagu faano waa adi
Hoobalow Hoobalow, Hoog ma yaallo X 2

English Translation:

Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong
We are like early morning rain
Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong
The bridegroom flew and went to foreign countries
Then he poured gold every where
Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong
The bride will have “boorrey” as her burden – camel and
Will milk “Baatir”, the she – camel
The beautiful one, hunger is far away from you
Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong
The bride is a crescent and like the star, the best of men
Tomorrow he will wear the white feather
Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong
The brave one who takes the gun and finishes the enemy
You are the praise worthy
Hoobalow Hoobalow, nothing is wrong

All the items that are taken to the wedding site by the family of the bridegroom on
the wedding day are called kiil literally meaning (weighing). “Weighing” might be
roughly interpreted to mean the scrutiny subjected to the items which are checked
thoroughly and is required to consist of two sacks of sugar, two sacks of rice, a box
of tea leaf, one carton of cooking oil and clothes, not only for the bride but also for
her female close relatives.

Sunday, early in the morning, a fat he-camel is slaughtered and food is cooked.
Midday the engagement takes place under a tree not far from the house of the
brother of the bride. The representative of the Khadi, the Islamic Jurist pronounces
the marriage contract which is normally four cows. In the afternoon, dances start
and continue up to the next morning. Common dances during weddings include ‘saar’, **Saar lugeed** (camel dance) and **Diisow** (cattle dance).

Early in the morning, after morning-prayer, the young bride is led to her house by a group of women. The procession starts from where the bride was kept during the wedding. The bride is normally kept and entertained in a separate house of her age mates and it is known as **Diggaal**, literally meaning (hiding). The procession first passes the house of the mother of the bride who offers some advice to her daughter. The women and the bride then proceed to her new matrimonial home. The bride is kept in the middle and behind a soloist who leads the following song as the women chant after her:

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Ehoow haya waye X2
Aayow ceebla gaabay
Ehoow haya waye X2
Aqalka Aar baa ku jiraaye
Ehoow haya waye X2
Aarow libaax baa ku jiraaye
Ehoow haya waye X2
Dhanka midig buu u fadhiyaayey
Ehoow haya waye X2
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Aayow Ebla gaabey
Ehoow haya waye X2
Wiilka weedhuu ku yiraahdo
Ehoow haya waye X2
Aqalka Aayow lama geeyooy
Ehoow haya waye X2
Aqalka aabboow lama geeyoy
Ehoow haya waye X2

English Translation:

Ebla my daughter the beautiful
Ehoow haya waye X2
There is a lion inside the house
Ehoow haya waye X2
There is a big male lion inside the house
Ehoow haya waye X2
He sits on the right side
Ehoow haya waye X2
Ebla my daughter the beautiful
Ehoow haya waye X2
What the boy tells you
Ehoow haya waye X2
Never take it to the house of your mother
Ehoow haya waye X2
Never take it to the house of your father
Ehoow haya waye X2

When the procession reaches the house, the bride is pushed into the house and the women disperse immediately. The waiting bridegroom sitting on a stool at the right side of the entrance grabs the bride and gives her a blow by a cane or a slap known as Agbad literally meaning (ownership). At this juncture the marriage process is complete and the wife starts serving food and tea to the age mates of the husband.

Women are never involved in the peace negotiations among the warring clans or sub-clans directly. Men might accommodate and carry the women’s views at their individual level and mainly from their wives and in the most confidential way, to the negotiation venue, but they will never sit with women and negotiate peace.

According to an interview that I conducted with both female and male respondents, there was mixed reaction towards the exclusion of women from the peace negotiations. Some of the male interviewees argued that women are excluded in the meetings for peace negotiation because they do not participate in active wars in the first place. Others gave some long-winded stories attempting to explain the reasons for the exclusion. Consider, for example, the following narrative:
There was one time in the past when women of a certain clan insisted that they should attend the peace meetings and the sultan, for the purpose of testing their capability, decided to send a woman to go and attend the negotiations. The meeting took a very long time, in fact three days continuously and without sleep. While men were actively negotiating, the only woman there, however, would not resist the fatigue and she fell asleep. When finally the meeting was over and some resolutions made, the lady was still asleep, but the male negotiators could not tell her to wake up fearing embarrassment, and they, therefore, started throwing and pouring sand on her. That way she woke up and went back to her clan who were waiting for her to break the news of the resolutions of the meeting. But unfortunately when the sultan of the clan asked her to brief the elders, she said that the only thing she could tell them is that in the meeting, the participants were pouring and throwing sand at one another.

The old-man, therefore, argued that women are not allowed into peace negotiations because of their physical weakness in comparison to men.

Another male respondent, Khalif Ibrahim whom I interviewed on 3\textsuperscript{rd} August, 2005 simply quoted the following proverb:

14. Bilcaan waxay tiri, "Ninkii Reeyaa, reerka leh".

Women say, (The Winner “In the clan battle” is the owner “Husband” of the family]

The proverb interprets the Somali way where the winners of the clan battle take away the looser’s women as their loot. The elder argued that, according to this proverb, women do not fight clan battles but they wait for the winner whom they follow to their homes as wives and so there is no point of inviting them to a peace negotiation.
The female respondents of my interview, however, seriously and vehemently disputed what they called men-created stories and proverbs that discriminate against women. Ebla Ali, a female opinion leader, argued that women are not inferior creatures to men. She contended that though men do not approve of women sitting side by side with them and negotiate, they (women) are, however, negotiating behind the scenes and have succeeded in finding solutions to puzzling issues in the past. The female opinion leaders argue this way because, in reality the role of women in the peace-making process is justified and commendable.

She narrated a story from the past where a tyrannical king once called all members of his cabinet (the council of elders) and as a way of testing the cleverest among them, gave them a puzzle/riddle to solve. The king said “before tomorrow morning every one of you should bring me an organ in living beings with which people ‘agree and disagree’.

Every elder got bewildered and retired to his hamlet to slaughter an animal and find out the organ. Some men thought it was the ‘liver’ while others thought the ‘thigh’ while some other got the ribs of the animal all of them regarded as the choice parts for men. As the struggle to get the special organ continued, a young lady noticed her father was unusually worried and uneasy. She enquired from him what was going on and he told her what the king had demanded and that he was confused and did
not know the organ. But the lady told her father that the organ that the king was looking for was the oesophagus known as Hunguri in the Somali language, also having a meaning of anything eaten or food in general. The lady simply convinced her father that, that was the thing (the Organ) people ‘agree’ and disagree – if they share the Hunguri fairly they are at peace, but if they do not fighting is inevitable.

The father did what the daughter told him: he plucked out the oesophagus of a he-goat and put it in a wooden container known as Surma and presented it to the king in the following morning. Surprisingly, it was accepted as the right organ and he was the only winner.

Ismino Sirat who I interviewed on 03rd August 2005, was keenly following the story reported that intelligence is a gift from Allah and it has not only been bestowed on the male sex. Then she invoked the following proverb.

15. “Aqli waa quud”

“Intelligence is a provision of Allah”

She said the meaning of the proverb is that one cannot pretend to be an intelligent person; it is only God who provides intelligence.
Before I conclude my discussion on the role of the Kenyan Somali women in the community, I would like to note that in the recent past, the strict and conservative culture of the Somalis in general is giving way to some more liberal and dynamic cultures of the world, especially the Western one. Therefore, many eastwhile stringent restrictions on women are now fading away. This is especially so in Somalia where women talk of human rights violation, organize demonstrations and peace meetings and even condemn some bad cultural practices like the female circumcision, child marriage and others.

2.6.3. Men

The roles of the Kenyan Somali men in the nomadic lifestyle are substantial and clear. Men are supposed to handle all the hard and tedious chores in the day-to-day lives of the nomadic community. They, for example, herd all types of animals especially the most cherished and revered livestock, the camel. The duties of men also include fencing the hamlet and mounting the collapsible huts (Agal Heeryo) on the burden camels when the hamlet is shifting to new grazing area. It is the duty of men also to go and look for a greener grazing land and report back to the hamlet before it is moved. This exercise is known as "Sahan" and the men on this mission may trek very long distances before they report back to the hamlet and give an account of what they have seen.
There is a common belief among the pastoralists that men are extremely essential in the well-being of the community. This belief is often reflected in the community’s folklore, particularly the proverb. The following proverbs illustrate this:

16. “Rag baa reer dhaqa”.
(Men are the ones [entrusted] to manage family affairs)

17. “Rabbow ama Roob keen, ama Riinow”
(Oh! Allah may either bring rain or Riinow {Man})

The meaning and the social context of these proverbs were given by Gure Mara’ade whom I interviewed on 14th November 2005. He says:

The first proverb indicates the perceived male superiority among the Somali community. It says only men can manage the affairs of the families.

The second proverb has a background story that goes this way: once there was a woman whose husband was away on safari. There was a severe drought in the area and the animals started dying. The lonely wife was worried but strongly believed if “Riinow” (her husband) was around, he could have done something. One night she came out of her hut and prayed to God through this proverb: “Rabbow ama Roob keen ama Riinow” (Oh! Allah may either bring Rain or Riinow). The meaning here is that either of the two—Rain or Riinow, can solve her problem.
Men in urban centres also run important businesses such as animal trading, wholesale/retail shops, miraa business and so on.

2.6.4. Elderly People and Children

The children and the aged people have also got their roles to play in the Kenyan Somali pastoralists. Children, at a very early and tender age, practise how to herd the stock. They usually start tending young animals and by the age of ten years graduate to the second stage known as “Dabadhoon”. This is the time when they cannot be given full responsibility of herding the camels by themselves, but they become apprenticed to a mature person and learn from him how to tend the animals. At the age of twelve, however, they are supposed to fully assume their role and do the herding alone or with very minimal supervision.

The children of the Kenyan Somali start attending Islamic schools called “Dugsi” at the age of four years. Even children in the urban centres do go to “Dugsi” first before they go to formal schools. There is also the “Madaraa” system which most of the children in districts and divisional headquarters attend in addition to the formal schools which they also attend. In North Eastern province pupils or candidates in KCPE and KCSE generally perform poorly in national examinations and this could be attributed, among other things, to the divided attention of the pupils in three parallel and different education systems, as mentioned above.


2.6.5 Somali Children’s Rite of passage

At birth the child is given a name. This is a religious one. A new born baby is named after one of the prophets of Allah as stated in the Holy Qoran. For a male child, common names given include Mohamed and Adam. Mohamed is the prophet of Islam, while Adam is the first man – cum – prophet. Some new born children are also given non – religious names. These names are drawn from the immediate environment. For example, a child may be named after a tree, thicket or a wild animal. Names like Garas (Tree), Durow (Thicket) and Sagar (Deer) are examples among many others. A child may also be named according to the situation prevailing at the time of its birth. A child born when it is raining is called “Haret” (Fresh water), while the one born in drought is named Abaar (Drought).

In accordance with the demands of Islam, a religious name given to a new born child is officialized or rather solemnized on the seventh day from the day the child was born. A ram or a goat is slaughtered and eaten on the seventh day and the religious ceremony known as Wanqal (ram – slaughtering) officializes the name of the new born. In this ceremony there is no citation of the Holy Quran; neither is any religious dance performed. After the relatives finish feasting on the meat, the father of the newly born child announces the name of the child and the gathering dissolves.
The first initiation of a new born child comes after forty days. Among the Somalis, both the mother and the new child have to observe forty days in - door. In this period, the mother is fed well and in turn nurses the child. These forty days are recognized by Islam as days for convulsing and nursing. After this period the child is brought out of the house to see the world. This exercise of exposing the child to the world is believed to be very crucial for the child’s physical, mental and spiritual development. It, therefore, has an initiation ceremony known as Gardaadis literally meaning “teaching or showing the way”. The ceremony which is conducted in early morning hours is supposedly carried out to instill good moral values in the child.

The process of the ceremony is as follows:

The initiator walks to the house where the mother and her child were kept during the forty days period. He/she picks the child and comes out of the house. Then he or she lifts up the child, stretching his/her arms upward while looking straight at the face of the child who is now above him / her (initiator) and pronounces the following:

Follow my character
Stand for the religion
Stand for your people
Be religious.
The initiator then moves with the child and places him on the top of the hump of a sitting burden – camel for a while and hands over the child back to his / her mother. Placing the child on the hump is symbolic in the sense that the child will become or emulate the beast of burden which is believed to be the most useful animal that enables the hamlet to move from one place to another. In other words, the child is expected to become useful to his people, ease their burden by herding the livestock and the burden – camel which the family depends on to move from the dry areas to greener pastures.

The initiator is a person of good character, morally upright and is known for his/her hard work. A female child is initiated by a woman while of course a male child is initiated by a male initiator. There is no animal slaughtered in this ceremony, neither does dancing take place. It is done silently and hurriedly and does not attract community attention.

At the age of six the child is circumcised. Circumcision is a religious obligation and unlike in many African communities it does not mark a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a low – key event which passes unnoticed. The Somali female circumcision is nowadays a concern for the civilized world. The cut is so brutal that it fabulates almost the whole of the virginia leaving only a small out – let for the urine to pass. The crusaders for Women rights and feminists call it “Female Genital
Mutilation” (FGM) and they campaign against it. There are many workshops and seminars on female circumcision conducted in North Eastern province. The workshops target the female circumsizers and the general public to sensitize the community of the devastating effect of FGM on female health.

The final and the most important initiation take place when the child is fifteen years old. The age of fifteen has a religious connotation because it is at this age that Islam recognizes that one is at the end of childhood. A ceremony is conducted and the child is formally handed over the duties of a man. This initiation ceremony is called “Qaanreeb” literally meaning “paying the debt”. The name interprets the community’s expectation that the “newly inaugurated” young member is to serve the community. He/she should pay back the debt because he is indebted to the community as it has brought him/her up. I must add, however, in some clans of the Kenyan Somali, this initiation is only for an orphaned child. There are also some other clans who only initiate the male child.

During the initiation, people gather under a shaded tree and a fat she-camel is slaughtered. The religious leaders (Ulama’a) read verses from the Holy Qoran. When the feasting is over, the child is called and made to stand in the middle of the crowd. Elders tell him that he is now formally recognized as a man/woman and is expected to independently carry out duties of a man or a woman.
The Somali children, right from birth, are prepared or trained for the harsh life surrounding them. Manhood and womanhood are very much emphasized and all ideals pertaining to them are carefully set as good standards for the children to emulate. A male child has to portray all the positive ideals of manhood (Raganimo) right from the cradle. He should for example be brave, patient, stoic and should love kinsmen. He should also portray qualities of being a good orator and be generous, qualities expected of a leader.

In the other hand, a female the child must carry, learn and demonstrate all those ideal characteristics of a socially accepted and respectable woman. She is, for example, expected to be shy, obedient, kin-loving, pleasant, clean, and hardworking. A woman with all these qualities is known as Gaari and the husband and relatives love and praise her.

The expectations of the community of the young ones, and the efforts made to mould them as responsible men and women is often portrayed in the following enya Somali proverbs:

18."Geesi dharabtuu, Ku Jiraa"

(Bravery Begins right from the cradle).
19. “Geesi Illah, ma xilo”
(Allah always gives guidance to the brave one)

20. “Naagtaada oo kaa warantay, waa maradaada oo kaa warrantay”.
(A wife divulging the secrets of her husband, is like clothes revealing the
secrets of the body)

21. “Goob loo galbado, Gaari baa leh”.
(A place where a man can call home is where “a smart wife” stays)

I got the meaning of these proverbs from Sheikh Abdiwahid, who I interviewed on
12th January, 2006. He interprets them as follows:

The first proverb means the boy who will become a brave man can be detected while
in his tender age. The second proverb means God is with the brave one, especially
when it comes to making some important but risky decions. The third proverb
compares a wife revealing the secrets of the husband with that of personified clothe
capable of talking to reveal what it covers in the body. We cannot discredit this
proverb by comparing with the “see-me-through” kind of clothes of nowadays,
because man made these clothes to be so transparent that they reveal the secrets of
the body but as a matter of fact the clothe itself cannot talk to tell us what it hides.
The forth proverb means a habitable and enjoyable home is synonymous with a
good wife. The popular belief is that a good wife equals to a good home and a bad
wife equals to a bad home.
Among the Kenyan Somalis elderly people are highly revered. They are exempted from the hard labour assigned to the young, strong men and women in the hamlet. However, it is normal once in a while for them to chip in and take care of the sick animals left at home or assist children in herding young animals.

The elderly people are believed to be the repository of the customs, traditions and the history of the clan. They are called Raagaay, meaning the ‘over-lived people and members of the community usually come to them and seek their advice. If, for example, the clan experiences a new occurrence in life, which is unprecedented, it is the Raagaay’ who are asked for an explanation. This explanation by The Raagaay to interpret the unforeseen event is called Facaad, literally meaning “reflection of the past”. This social group is the embodiment of the community’s oral culture, particularly in the form of the proverb which they liberally use whenever they speak. This is also the group which, unless too old, and bed ridden - an age known as cantatab (senile) - makes the bulk of the opinion leaders or elders that represent the various clans in peace negotiations. It is also the prerogative of these elders to either individually or collectively decide when and where the hamlet is to shift. But the decision to move the hamlet comes only after the elders carefully consider the report of the Sahan.
Among the Somalis, old age is associated with wisdom. So, old people are given due respect in all communal activities. They are, for example, the ones who talk first in any social meeting, pray for the meeting, close and open the meetings. During a meal the elders are the first to taste food before anyone else. An order of seniority is strictly followed in any activity and so if there is a person older than you by even one year, he has to be given respect and has the first chance. Proverbs do support this claim:

22. “Nin gu’ kaa wayn, gu’ baas kaa weyn”.

(A person older than you by less than a year, is older than you a whole year).

According to Noor A. Ibrahim interviewed on 10th December, 2005 the proverb means whoever is older than you for even a few months, deserves your respect.

2.6 The Family Unit

The most elementary level of the Kenyan Somali social organization, like any other community, is the family unit. Somalis, like most African communities, are polygamous. Extended families with many grandchildren, especially male offspring, are regarded a blessing by Allah and are highly esteemed.

Some elders I interviewed unanimously contended that a Somali never worries about how to feed or bring up his many children. They said this is because the act of feeding is a preserve of Allah who is the provider for his creatures. For that reason
Some modern practices such as family planning have not been accepted and are seen as anti-Islamic and brought about by non-Islamists. Respondents to my interview from different clans told me that the nomadic pastoralists, like Kenyan Maalis have as many children as possible. When asked why they like many children, they said it is because children are needed to assist in the harsh nomadic life. In other words, when a man has many grown-up children, especially male ones, he would herd the animals on his behalf and his role is reduced to mere supervision and resting.

The second reason given for the intense love for many children is for the purpose of inheritance. Men always long for children who would inherit their stock and pray to Allah on their behalf while in the grave. The person without even a single male heir is called Gablan and both the name and its connotation are expressions of stigma and pity.

Proverbs, such as the following, show the longing for many children and the reason for it.

23. "Nin caruur leh baa cuud dhaqda".

(A person with children is capable of herding his animals (effectively)).
Abdi interviewed on 18th November, 2005 says the proverb means wealth. In the Somali pastoral community, wealth depends on the number of children that one has. This means the children would herd the animals effectively and, in turn, the animals would breed and multiply.

The immediate family head of the Kenyan Somali is the father. He usually makes decisions affecting members of his family. Some of these decisions include choosing spouses for his children, especially the female ones and deciding the amount of bride wealth a suitor should pay. The head of the family is, however, required by customary law to consult with his closest kinsmen known as Jilib before making such decisions.

7. Occupation and Economy

The major occupation of the Kenyan Somali which also makes the basis of the community’s economy is pastoralism. The community practices nomadic lifestyle— they move from one place to another in search of water and greener pastures. The animals herded by the community include camels, cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. Of all these animals, the camel is the most liked and valued. However, south of Garissa district, which has now become the new district of Ijara, cattle are the most valued domestic animals.
People depend on livestock for their livelihood. They eat the meat, drink the milk and then sell the animals to get money to buy other essential commodities. Goats, for example, are brought to the animal market on a weekly basis and generate cash to buy sugar, tea leaves and maize flour. The goat and the sheep are the stock that the wife can take to the market and sell if need arises without express authority from her husband. Otherwise, cattle, and especially the camels, are only sold in extraordinary circumstances. A camel, for example, may be sold when there is a wedding or an important member of a family is deceased.

Every major town in North Eastern Province has a market-day for cattle, locally known as Soka ya Ngombe. In Garissa, for example, the day is Wednesday. Of late, Garissa has become a very big market for cattle. The cattle sold in Garissa come from the districts of North Eastern Province and as far north as, Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia.

Other than herding animals, people in the towns also do engage in different types of trade. The major trading activities in towns include: animal trading, wholesale and retail business and miraa trading. In Garissa and Mandera towns there is a significant number of people that are engaged in farming.
The nomadic pastoralists have got a historical and traditional system of grazing their animals. Animals for example, are divided into herding units. During the dry seasons of Hagaa and Jilaal, the less hardy animals such as cows, goats, sheep, donkeys, burden-camels and milch-camels (camels that are milked) and the families are kept near the rivers, while the stronger camels and cattle go to the dry areas to graze. The families near the rivers or wells who take care of the less hardy animals are known as Guri, while the animals in the dry land with their herders are known as Jil. These animals, especially the hardy camels, come to the rivers or wells once a month to drink water and they are herded by some strong young men. The smallest herding unit is called waabsheli, literally meaning “one hut” and it is usually with the Jil animals. Later on, when the rains come and herding units reunite, they become what is known as Deris, literally meaning “neighbour”. This Deris usually consists of five or more hamlets whose members are close relatives and their children study the Holy Quran together.

The pastoralists’ collapsible huts are made of locally woven grass mats Heeryo and animal hides supported by intertwined, flexible poles. The nomadic craftsmen make utensils like milking vessels, Ameel, water containers, Haan, plates, Kur/xeero spoons, Mooqo/fandhaal, wooden billows Barkin and others items from tree trunks.
28. Religious and Other Beliefs

The Kenyan Somalis are Sunni Muslims as opposed to Shi’ite Muslims. They show deep attachment to Islam and strictly adhere to the orthodox tradition of the Prophet Mohamed (Peace be upon him).

The Somalis in general are popularly believed to be 100% Muslim but of late there are a few people who have adopted other religions (Abdisalan 2004). The Kenyan Somalis mainly follow the doctrine and laws of one of Muslim’s school of thought known as Al-Shafi’I, established by the Muslim Jurist by the name Sheikh Al-Shafi’I.

All religious duties such as the five daily prayers, the fast of Ramadan, the pilgrimage to Mecca, Alms giving and the confession of the faith – that there is no God but Allah and Mohamed is his messenger, are strictly observed.

As strict Muslims, the Kenyan Somalis attribute every occurrence to God’s will. According to them, He is the ultimate causation of every event, bad or good, and fortunes are all in His hands.

Other than Islam, however, there are other traditional beliefs and practices that co-exist or survive alongside Islam. Like most other African communities, the supposed
The influence of the clan ancestors on the lives of their descendants is common among the Kenyan Somalis. The other beliefs include the supposed prediction of what the future holds for one if s/he hears songs of some certain birds. For example, when an owl hoots at night near the hamlet, it portends imminent death of an important member in the family. Another common belief is what is known as caaganaan, literally meaning ‘forbidden’ or Haram or roughly the clan taboo. This is the belief that a certain clan may not eat a certain lamp or organ in the body of the animal that is slaughtered, or may not be permitted to hunt a certain wild animal. Some clans, for example, refrain from eating the meat of the thigh or the thigh borne. Others do not hunt, eat or even use the hide of a certain antelope locally known as Mids.

The stock of beliefs is so vast that we cannot exhaustively discuss it in this study. However, the Kenyan Somalis differ with most African communities when it comes to beliefs about death. For example, while in many African communities death could be caused by some magical powers, the Somalis strongly believe that death, whatever apparent cause may be, can only be caused by Almighty God.

Almost all communal activities of the Kenyan Somalis have religious connotations and sentiments as reflected by proverbs. Religious sentiment is, for example, explicit in these proverbs:
24. "Bisinkaa, baraka leh".
(Start with the name of Allah to be blessed)

25. "Alla qabe, ma qoofo".
(Whoever relies on Allah has no worry).

26. "Dil iyo nolol, Ilaah baa leh".
(Both Death and life are the preserve of Allah).

Abdikadir Sheikh interviewed on 21st December 2005 told me the first proverb means whatever activity started with the Name of Allah, the most merciful, the most gracious, is blessed. The second proverb means God would take care of whoever trusts and relies on Him. The third proverb means that one should not worry because both life and death are in the hands of God.

2.9. Language

The Somali language is spoken in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti. It has close grammatical resemblance to the languages of Galla people such as the Rendille, Boranas, Saho, Bejo, Afar and Boni. Somali resemblance with Galla languages can mainly be observed from two characteristics: the first one is some terminologies [cognates] that have the same meaning and similar pronunciation. For example, in Rendille and Somali "Nose" is called San and "Bats" are called Rara’ato. The second case is the accentual pattern that is used to distinguish between some
nouns. In other words, it is the shift of the stress within the noun that changes the meaning. An example is the word Inan (boy) and ‘inan’ (girl) in Somali and in Borana the word Lupu (soul) and Lupu (neck).


The Somali language got its official orthography in 1972 when the government of the country chose to adopt the roman script. The Somali script consists of thirty-two sounds. Twenty-two of these are consonant sounds, while five are long vowel sounds. The other remaining five sounds are short vowels.

The Somali community, in general, is a monolingual society. There are, however, some dialectal differences. For example, there are intonation differences between the Kenyan Somalis and the one in Somalia. Likewise, there are clear dialectal differences among the Kenyan Somalis themselves. The Ogadens who live in Ijara district, for example, have a different accent from the ones living in Garissa district. The difference mainly comes in the sentence pattern or structure and word formation. For example, while those in Ijara District may say Lama gaar? [Has it
been reached?), the Ogaden speaker in Garissa would construct the same sentence and say Ma la gaaray? There are also detectable dialectal differences among the major clans of the Kenyan Somalis. A clear case is the one between the Daarood and the Hawiye clans. While, for example, the Hawiye in Wajir District would say Dhammale (Whole), the Daarood in Garissa would say Dhamaan. The proverbs reflect these dialectical differences but the meanings and purpose remain the same.

2.10. Conflict

Conflict in the Somali world, and the way it usually happens, can be split into three main categories:

- Conflicts between two individuals of the same clan.
- Conflicts among the sub-clans in the main clan.
- Conflicts among two major clans

Before we analyze the three categories of conflicts above, I propose we first explore the causes or what prompts conflicts and the indicators to impending conflicts.

2.10.1. Causes of Conflicts

A proverb states that:
27. “Shimbir Habeen Duulay, wixii Duuliyaa Jira”

(If a bird flies at night, there is a cause)

According to Nuriye Ammalla interviewed on 11th July, 2005 the proverb means that any change in one’s conduct must have a cause.

...when we often repeat the word “conflict” in our thesis and we frequently refer to Kenyan Somalis, it might create the impression that the community is synonymous with in-fighting and squabbles, but that is far from the truth. The Kenyan Somalis are a peace-loving community and naturally stress a culture of tranquillity and coexistence among themselves and with others. Their religion, Islam, also advocates peace and good neighbourliness. The community says:


(A conflict kills a son, but does not bear a son).

Sino Sirat interviewed on 3rd August, 2005 told me the proverb discourages conflicts by saying that conflicts only kill the sons of the community, but never produce sons. This brings out the point that conflict in this community does not come out of sheer love for war, but there are always causes that prompt it to occur. Some of the major causes of conflict include: -

- Trespassing into grazing land of another clan
Ownership of water points

Mixing of sick animals and healthy ones

Abusive language through poems or dances

Violence against women – beating, raping etc.

1.02. Trespassing into Grazing Land of another Clan

Trespassing into grazing land of another clan by a clan usually creates a rift between the two clans and often ends in bloody clashes. The pastoralists, as I said earlier in this thesis, are always on the move in search of greener pasture and water. In reality there is no sense of territorial boundaries. However, despite that free wandering of the Kenyan Somali nomads in the vast arid land of Northern Kenya, every clan has a traditional grazing land associated with it. The clan usually claims ownership of this land. There is a common identity or kinship tie between the people who live or own the land. Proverbs reflect on this claim of ownership and the common identity of the owners of the grazing land. The proverb below is an example:


(A snake has same colour as the environment it lives in)
Sheikh Garad, who was interviewed on 11th July, 2005 said that the proverb urges that one should behave the way his host behaves, reminiscent of the English saying:

- ‘If you go to Rome, do as the Romans do’

The type of conflict which occurs as a result of trespass normally happens among the major clans. Elder Abdi Ali interviewed on 1st September, 2005 told me that cases involving land are of grave concern and that no clan is allowed to encroach on another clan’s piece of land. He said that while omissions or commissions by a clan against another can be negotiated to reach a consensus, a land dispute is difficult to negotiate and often results in bloody clashes. He invoked the proverb below to emphasize his point.

29. “Ku dhufosho maogii, ka Dhihid maleh.”

(No need to negotiate, just to hit)

Eno Ali, who was interviewed on 22nd December, 2005, concurs with Abdi’s explanation and says the proverb means you cannot negotiate with somebody who has already settled in your land.

Abdi Ali further told me that the most recent conflicts over grazing lands in the North Eastern Province are, for example, the ones between the Daarood and the
Hawiy clans which occurred in 1992 and the one between Awbuduwaq and the Awlya clans of Ogaden in 1999 respectively.

1.0.3. Ownership of Water Points

Water points are another cause for clashes in this region. The North Eastern Province, where the Kenya Somalis live, is dry and water is scarce. The main water sources are the Rivers Tana, Dawa and shallow wells in Wajir District. There are also some natural ponds, pans and few dams and Boreholes dug by the government. Clans compete for water, particularly during the dry seasons. Most of the grazing can only be of use to the people if they have access to water. Clans, therefore, effectively occupy the areas where there is water and prevent all outsiders from watering their animals there. Sometimes, however, it happens that a clan forces its way into the water points of another clan and waters its stock without the consent of the occupying clan. This is perceived as day-light robbery and the affected clan immediately mobilizes its members to fight the aggressors. The scarcity of water in the area and its essentiality in life is clearly revealed in the following Kenyan Somali proverb which says:

30. "Nafta Caano, Nolosha Biyo"
(The Soul is Milk, the Life is Water)
According to Shaboy Noor who was interviewed on 16th November, 2005 the proverb means life is impossible without water and milk.

10.5. Mixing of Sick Animals and Healthy Ones

Another major factor which contributes to making conflicts is when two groups of animals, some healthy and others sick, mix-up. The Kenyan Somalis, as pastoralists strictly value animals and take maximum caution to safeguard them from contagious diseases. This is particularly true with the camel which is believed to be very vulnerable to diseases. The most common contagious animal diseases in Northern Province include anthrax, PPR (Goat and Sheep Plague), Rift Valley Fever, foot-rot and the animal skin diseases. A good and trusted herder, according to the community's norms and expectations, is the one who prevents his animals from contracting diseases. The process through which healthy animals contract diseases from sick ones is through the sniffing of the sick one by a healthy animal which is known as Sanqaad. For the camel, it is believed that it can contract diseases by sniffing the foot-path of sick animals. For these reasons, a herder, could, therefore, do his best to herd his stock in solitude and away from any anger that might be posed by sick animals. But sometimes, unfortunately, a careless and unminding herder may drive his sick stock of animals into the healthy herd. When sick animals get mixed up with healthy ones, either by accident or by design, it is likely to cause fighting between the two herders in which the loser
would raise the alarm and call his clan to come to his rescue. Fighting that starts this way may quickly spread and end in serious clan confrontation.

Proverbs warn against the mixing of the two herds of animals because of their consequences. The proverb below is an example of that warning:

31. “Hal Baruur ah baa, Baruuryo Badan Qurmisa”

(One piece of rotten meat spoils many pieces of fresh meat if stored together).

A respondent by the name Nuurto Ali interviewed on 18th December, 2005 says the proverb means some animal deseases are contagious. It also means evil friends have had influences.

2.10.6. Abusive Language through Poems or Dances

Trading abuses and accusations through poems is also a common cause of rift among individuals and clans. A poet might decide to condemn what s/he perceives as a gross misconduct of a member of another clan. Among the Kenyan Somalis, whatever is said through a poem, be it negative or positive, is taken as truth because people learn poems by heart immediately they are cited and especially in the event of an abusive poem against a certain clan. A poet may use quite a number of fora to relay his/her poetic message. However, a very common occasion which is synonymous with inter-clan fighting is during the performance of Saar (Camel-dance). The dance which, according to Mzee Farah [interviewed on 02/10/2005], is
one of the oldest traditional performances, is usually performed during the dead
ight and in wedding ceremonies by young men and women. The women make a
half circle and clap, as one or two poets recite the poem, while men dance in the
middle of the circle. This is the time when a poet may decide to abuse members of
another clan using the poem and most often fighting ensues.

The government officials or the administrators in North Eastern Province seem to
have already detected this clash-prone dance of Saar. Mzee Bunow told me that in
some division of Garissa District, the District Officers (Dos) and the Officers
Commanding Stations (OCS) banned the performance of Saar. Whenever a group of
young people try to perform the dance, the police disperse them. The dance,
however, is so popular among the different clans that they hide in the bush and
perform it. I must point out that it is not always true that whenever Saar is
performed people fight, but it is one of the causes of conflict.

The latest such conflict ignited by some poets through the Camel-dance or Saar was
between the Mohamed and the Ali sub-clans of The Adendhere main clan in
February, 2005. An example of an insult that cannot easily be forgiven is when a
poet calls the other clan “Midgaan” (The outcast). The community is conscious of
this reality and this comes out in the proverb:
32. "Nab iyo Naar, baa la Simay"

(False Allegation and Hell Fire are just the same)

"They affect one the same way".

Abdi Mohamed interviewed on 2nd December, 2005 says the proverb means there are some allegations that the clan or the person cannot tolerate, same as fire cannot be tolerated.

10.7. Violation against Women- Beating, Raping and so on.

Violating women, among the Kenyan Somali, is unacceptable and may cause conflict. The female members of this community, as I stated earlier, are seriously discriminated against. However, they enjoy a level of protection by the community cause of their position as mothers. I, however, quickly add here that this fight for women’s honour is mainly out of sympathy as women are seen as a defenceless, inferior creature. It is not a genuine intention to protect women rights. In fact men protect women in this way to just stamp their authority and consolidate their position of superiority. Even in tribal clashes, men remain the protector of women and the winners of the battle derive pleasure and satisfaction to emasculate the losers in the presence of women. Any indecent assault, for example, is treated as a rape case and rape is as bad as killing the lady. The revenge could be killing the pist or taking blood-compensation. In July, 2005 as I was writing this thesis, a man was killed to avenge on a woman who had been raped by a member of his (deceased) clan. The two clans were almost at war if it were not for the timely
interventions of elders from both sides who agreed on the amount of the blood-
compensation to be paid to the clan of the deceased man.

A conflict could arise between the clans, for example, if a woman is raped, beaten
up or mishandled by her husband or his relatives. When the rape victim is a virgin,
the offence is taken more seriously than raping a divorcee or somebody’s wife. It is
nen worse when one mistreats Agoonleey (widow) before she is inherited.

According to Qoqane and Aden who I interviewed on 7th October, 2005 at Danyere,
dashes that take place as a result of a woman or women being mistreated are the
orst, most prolonged and very difficult to resolve. In other words, it is believed that
een a coward fights fiercely for his wife’s, daughter’s or his sister’s honour.
roverbs convey this as is evident in the examples below:

33. Soomaali waxey tiri “Col naag ka kacay, iyo cadho Qurbac ka kacdey,
midna ma Haraan”
The Somali say: “Conflict about woman, and skin disease spread by a calf
never end”. 
34. Soomali waxey Tiri, "Nin Naag Eryeyso, iyo Rati Rati Eryahayo, Midna Kaama Gudaan"

The Somali say: "A man incited by a woman, and a he-camel running from another one, will not stop till they run over you".

According to Muhiyo Aden interviewed on 9th December, 2005, the two proverbs mean that the intensity of a conflict depends on what instigates it.

2.11. Indicators of Imminent Conflict

The clan conflicts among the Somali do not just happen without some signs that a conflict is in the offing. In other words, there are always some indicators that there will be an imminent conflict or a conflict is inevitable. On keen observation and thorough research, I came to find out that there are usually three main indicators of any conflict among Kenyan Somalis. These are:

- Sending of an emissary
- Stealing of livestock
- Sending away wives to their maiden homes

2.11.1. Sending of an Emissary

There are sometimes minor disagreements among some members of different clans. The reasons for these disagreements usually are as a result of women abusing one
another as they fetch water or collect firewood, or teenagers fighting as a sign of showing their bravery. When this happens repeatedly, the affected clan sends an emissary of peace and warning to the other clan that has caused the trouble. This exercise is known as “Ergo” and the emissary lodges an official complaint with the leader of the aggressor clan. This is supposed to be repeated three times after which, if any action is not taken, revenge follows.

Some proverbs are available for use before conflicts so as to warn the aggressors. See the following:

35. “Balaayo ka hor Tag Bay leedahay, ee ka dabadag ma leh”
(Catastrophe can be prevented, but cannot be reversed)

36. “Nin wixii joogo aan ka talinin, wixii soo socdana kama taliyo”
(The person who cannot solve the present problem cannot solve the future one.)

37. “Waraaba Daalay, Diritiisaa loo tagaa”
(A hyena that was chased and chased and got exhausted would fight fiercely)

The meaning of these proverbs were given by Shamsa Ali interviewed on 19th December, 2005. He said that the first proverb means that conflict can be averted,
but if it happens, the consequences cannot be reversed. The second proverb means
that an elder who cannot resolve the current conflict is not expected to resolve a
future one. The third proverb means that too much provocation can lead one to lose
patience.

11.2. Stealing of Livestock
Sometimes conflicts are preceded by stealing of animals by individuals in a clan.
This stealing is not on a large scale and neither is it rustling as such. Rustling of
animals is usually exercised during clashes where the enemy troops surround
hamlets, kill any male, even toddlers in the vicinity and go away with all animals.
Unlike rustling, this one is just an act of theft and in a very small scale. There is a
way to know if that kind of theft took place during the day. For example, as the
animals come back from grazing at dusk, the herders use a method called Ilmarin,
literally meaning “taking the eye through the animals” which is not actual counting
but to survey and find out if any animal is missing. The scale of this kind of theft of
animals normally involves about one, two or three animals that are noted missing
and immediately Birmad (Search) is lodged. Tracking of animals is very easy
because nomads are experts in following footprints. The intelligence news gathering
is also very effective and despite the lack of modern communication facilities, like
telephones, word of mouth spreads very fast. In fact, culturally, when two people
exchange greetings and shake hands, each one is required to give all the news that
he has to the other one. This way, it becomes possible to know those individuals
who stole the animals and the clan that they hail from.
The affected clan or sub-clan may exercise patience in the second and third incident and might only ask for the animals to be returned, but anything more than that precipitates fighting. Animal theft is, therefore, another indicator of looming clan dashes.

There are some clans and sub-clans among Kenyan Somalis, for example, who are notorious for animal theft. When the news of animal theft spreads, elders first consider checking with some notable clans. The clans are the ones who are usually known to oftenly steal from one another. The clans have adopted the habit of stealing to an extent that they cannot restrain themselves from it. The following proverb is commonly used to explain the situation of these people or clans.

38. "Gacan wax Qaadma Baratay, Haddii la Gooyana, Gumudkaa Dhaqaaqa" (A hand that used to steal even if amputated, the stump will try to steal).

According to Sa’adia Muktar interviewed on 8th August, 2005 the proverb means: old habits die hard.

1.11.3. Sending away Wives from their Matrimonial Homes

Another indicator of looming conflict is when women are mistreated by their husbands and sent back to their clans as an indicator of severing relationship. The other clan may also respond by sending away daughters from the perceived enemy. This means that both clans are now ready for war. This practice is particularly
The Somalis have great respect for inter-marriage relationships. In-laws, especially the mother-in-law, is both highly respected and feared. She is feared in the sense that the slightest disagreement with one’s mother-in-law can create a big problem for his family. So in the event of wives being sent back to their parents (in-laws) the issue is taken very seriously and is a strong indicator of impending war. This practice is locally called **Xididiisib** literally meaning “uprooting”. Unless an immediate solution to the disagreement is found, the other clan will respond in the same way, while some others might even divorce their wives, thus precipitating deadly clashes.

### 2.12. Folklore

Elder Aden Omar who I met in Garissa on 16th August, 2005 and interviewed is contented that the Somali community generally has well developed and sophisticated folklore or oral literature. He says the wisdom embodied in these oral materials is very essential in the well-being and smooth running of the social affairs of the community because very often and in various occasions these materials are re-invented and utilized for a number of purposes. Elder omar, who is known for his deep knowledge of the Somali folklore states that Proverbs are a good example of
this claim because he often uses them for various purposes including debate, conversation and peace negotiations.

Referring to proverbs he collected, Mohamed Shurie supports the claim by Aden Omar when he (Shurie) says:

Af soomaligu wuxuu ku tilmaaman yahay af murti iyo xikmad qoto dheer loo Origin of proverbs he collects, he (Shurie) says:

The Somali language is known to be a language with deep rooted wisdom and literature. The proverbs and sayings almost make half of the language. If it is debate, conversation, negotiation or normal address, proverbs play a big role.

Although our major concern in this work is the Somali proverb, I opt to briefly discuss other forms of folklore as reflected by the sources in the field. I start with the proverb:

2.1 Proverbs

Mohamed Shire (1974) in an attempt to define the proverb states that the proverb is a few words of wisdom, usually not more than a sentence, which is based on the poetic technique of alliteration. Using the same definition he gave the proverb, Mohamed moves further to state the difference between the Somali Proverb and a
He argues that, unlike the proverb, the saying is not based on alliteration, but consists of plain language with deeper meaning. Going by this claim of Mohamed, which I concur with, all that we analysed in this thesis are proverbs and not sayings, simply because, each and everyone alliterates in a sound. Let us move on now.

In a peace meeting I attended in Danyere where the two sub-clans of Mohamed Nageye were reconciled, I got the opportunity to discuss and interview an elder by the Bilow Dabar about the proverb. It was on 29th July, 2005. From the interview I deduced that the proverb is one of the most respected and widespread genre in the Kenyan Somali oral literature. People show a great interest in this particular art and use it for various purposes. In fact, from the way elders are interested and were singing the proverb in the negotiation, it occurred to me that, in the art of proverb taking and usage, the Somalis in general may very well be compared to the traditional Ibo society about whom Achebe (1958) says “Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten!”

Known as Maahmaah in Somali language, proverbs are important tools in communicating important messages. They are widely used by the elderly people specially when they are mediating between warring clans. The Somali proverbs are usually short and transmitted in complex poetic forms with sometimes abstruse condensed) language.
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1.12.2 Poetry

A Kenyan Somali poet whom I interviewed in Balambala on 6th October, 2005 confirmed that this is another much valued genre of the Kenyan Somali oral literature. It is in this genre where professionalism is strictly observed because it is believed that poetry composition is a talent which only accomplished and professional poets can perform. Among the Kenyan Somalis, poetry is utilized for various purposes and in a variety of occasions. Poems, for example, are used by warring parties and peace mediators.

The poet hinted to me that poetic performances go along with or accompany almost all social activities. There are for example, wedding poems, religious songs, cattle poems, children’s poems/songs and so on.

During the interview, the poet was able to memorise and recite many poems to support his claim that most of the Somalis learn poems by heart and for that reason poems spread with such speed that some people believe that they are transported by genii (Devils).

1.12.3 Narratives

In my research, when I wanted to know about narratives, I involved field informants. For example, interviewed two elders, Noor J. Ali and Ebla Ali, on 30th September, 2005 and 3rd August, 2005 respectively. From the interview, it was evident that the Kenyan Somalis have got a strong tradition of storytelling. Narratives are rich in
terms of meaning and reflect the Somali people's world views, their aspirations and their concern for better life in this world and the hereafter.

Conventionally, and as I was told by the respondents, there are various types of narratives such as Animal stories, myths, trickster stories, aetiological tales and legends. Among the Somali people, narratives convey different meanings for different listeners. Like other African societies, story-telling among the Kenyan Somalis is an entertaining exercise. However, there are no established, expert and professional story-tellers. In other words, everyone can chip in and tell a story; however, grandmothers are respected for their immense contribution to this field.

The elders narrated to me stories which had formal ways of beginning. When an oral artist intends to tell a story s/he, for example, says, Sheeko Sheeko (Story, story). The audience replies in chorus Sheeko xariir (Good Story) and the story starts. The Kenyan Somali audience actively participate in the story, for instance, they sing with the storyteller when there is a song, ask questions and comment about the events in the story.

As I noted from the interview there are many characters in the Kenyan Somali narratives and they include both living and non-living things. The most famous
characters in the stories are the fox, hare, the elephant, beautiful girls, ogres, kings and many others. Unlike in many African communities, the most cunning and famous animal trickster in the Somali oral narrative is the fox. We should nevertheless note that the hare also plays a prominent role in the trickster stories.

2.12.4 Riddles

Abdi Ali interviewed on 1st September, 2005 informed me the genre is called “Halxiraale” in the Somali language and it consists of a short and puzzling statement intended to test one’s wit and is famous with children and young people. He contends that it is extremely difficult to see elderly respected people participating in the riddle performance. The elder says riddles have a formal way of beginning. For example, the poser of the riddle says Googgaa and the audience responds Cadale and riddle follows. There are also certain parts in North Eastern province like Ijara District where the poser of the riddle says Hibooya and the challengers reply Hibirq and the riddle follows. The researcher and the respondent practised together the following riddle to see the formal “beginning”:

Poser (Respondent); Googgaa

Audience (Researcher); Cadale

Poser: Ul aad qaadan Karin( stick that you can not take )

Audience: Mas (Snake)
12.5 Tongue - Twisters

A lady respondent, Halima M. Issack, interviewed on 20th December, 2005 said this is the most popular genre with young people. In Somali it is called “Carrabjalqin” and is regarded as a minor genre that has nothing to do with any serious business in the community. The tongue twister is an alliterative utterance primarily intended to test how fluently and accurately one can deliver it without stumbling or faltering. Halima explained that it is structured in a way that a slip of the tongue may result in an abusive or indecent statement. Because of the way it is constructed and the risk of embarrassment in case one says it wrongly, it is difficult to find respected people participating in its performance. Children in the rural areas, however, find this genre a very effective mode of entertainment.

13 Conclusion

In this chapter we managed to discuss many social aspects of the Kenyan Somali community. We discussed the physical location of the research community which is in the Eastern Province of Kenya. The climatical conditions of the province and the amenities were discussed. We have discussed the ethnic background of the Kenyan Somali and traced their origin, clan system, migration in accordance with their folklore materials got from the field. The chapter has also discussed about the various social groups such as the council of elders, Immams/Sheikhs, women, men and children. It also briefly outlines the causes and indicators of conflicts and other genres of folklore as perceived by the community and inline with our theoretical
framework. I will now move on to the 3rd chapter which will elucidate more on the question of 'Conflict' in the Kenyan Somali world.
CHAPTER THREE

Functions of the Proverb

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I address objective (i) of my study, that is, to analyze the content and function of the Somali Proverb. Material used in the chapter came from a variety of sources including interviews with members of the community, literature and folklore of the Somali community, and my own analysis and interpretation of the proverbs as a conflict resolution tool.

It is instructive to point out that proverbs serve a multiplicity of roles in this community. For example, they inform and educate on communal life, co-operation and unity, determination, perseverance, and patience. They also teach rationality, humaneness and stress kinship bond while they warn against greed and selfishness, pride and arrogance. In addition, proverbs act as a mirror through which the community can examine itself. Although it would be interesting for the reader to get details of these functions, they are, however, not the focus of my study and the reader would be advised to read about them in general text books on the folklore of the Kenyan Somali.
My focus in this chapter is on how the Somali use the proverb as a conflict
resolution tool. Details on content of the proverb, where and how proverbs are used
in peace negotiating meetings are outlined and discussed. I start my discussion by
looking at how conflicts are solved traditionally.

3.1 Traditional Approaches to Solving Conflicts

There are various approaches and attempts by the Kenyan Somalis to solve
conflicts. The following approaches which include both verbal and action oriented
measures were observed during peace meetings;

- Negotiation

- Religious perspective

- Blood compensation

- Tying of the culprit to a tree

- Ostracization

3.1.1 Negotiation

The willingness of the elders from the two warring clans to sit together and negotiate
is one of the major approaches to solving conflicts. It is always believed that
negotiations between the elders would bring positive results. The proverb below brings out this:

39. "Hadal Daawa ayuu Keenaa, Ee Dab ma kiciyo."

(Negotiation brings solution; it does not light up a fire).

Yussuf interviewed on 5th December, 2005 said the proverb is an equivalent of the English saying: let us talk meaning let us agree.

In fact in all the peace meetings I attended, positive results were achieved through negotiation.

The composition of the negotiators representing the clans in the peace meeting is well-defined. These are the clan elders and orators, People who understand the depth and the cause of the conflict; Men who can draw comparison from the past events and the history of their clan and who can abundantly use proverbs to drive home the points they are making.

During the negotiations, proverbs are used as an artistic discourse strategy to resolve conflict. They are the force behind any meaningful negotiations. It is generally believed in this community that an elder who quotes many proverbs would most likely stand a better chance of being understood better, than the one who uses
languages. According to my observation of the negotiation arenas, elders' use of proverbs is usually based on six purposes. In other words, so as to reach mutual understanding, proverbs are used to achieve these six purposes:

- To prepare the audience
- To establish linkage between past and present
- To summarize or conclude the speech
- To embellish the speech
- To add weight (wisdom) to the argument/proposal
- For comic relief

In a peace meeting I attended at Kasha location on 11th July, 2005, I observed the proverb being used to lay the ground or prepare the participants of the peace meeting for the impending address. It, for example, became common in the meeting for an elder negotiator to stand up, when he is given chance to talk, clear his throat, and start with a proverb that clears the way for what he is going to say. I have observed that the speaker, for example, in the introductory proverb, deliberately
betrays himself in the eyes of the negotiators, while in reality everybody understands that he actually means the opposite. The speaker leaves the task of assessing him and his speech entirely to the listeners. An elder negotiator, Nuriye Ammalla, for example, stood up and started his contribution with the following proverb:

40. *Waxaa La yiri, “Nin Weer Gaaban iyo Waranba Wey Degdegaan”*

It was said, (A short-sighted man and a spear (thrown) both hurry up)

According to the user, the proverb means that the less intelligent participants in the peace meetings give their speeches before other negotiators, while warriors fight before others.

From the surface meaning, the speaker in this proverb is saying that he is not an intelligent man and that is why he is in a hurry to talk before the more intelligent members of the community articulate their views and shame him. In the same peace meeting one of the speakers, Sheikh Ibrahim Yarrow, rose and began his address with a proverb that was indirectly critical of those who spoke before him and who, according to him, had talked a lot but their talk was only empty rhetoric. He used the proverb:

41. *“Hadal Haan, ma Buuxso”*

(Speech does not Fill, Haan (a wooden vessel)

According to Yarrow, the proverb means empty rhetoric cannot resolve conflicts.
As a way of preparing his colleagues in the meeting, one speaker, Ali Ahmed, opened his talk with a proverb whose meaning could be construed to mean that neither those who talked briefly nor the ones, who gave lengthy speeches, have tackled the subject matter adequately. The speaker introduced himself as a person who will not talk too long to waste time but, at same time will neither be very brief to compromise the essential agenda of the meeting. The elderly speaker opened his address with the following proverb:

42. Waxaa la yiri “Hadal Nin Badiyey ma Dhamaynin, Nin Gaabiyayna ma Hambaynin”.

It is said: (A talkative person did not ground the issue; neither did the brief one leave anything “for other speakers”)

Ali told me later that the proverb means that neither lengthy speeches, nor brief ones may adequately tackle the subject of discussion.

In a peace meeting I attended at Kora Hotel in Garissa which was between the two clans of Mohamed and Ali Adendere on 21th July, 2005, I observed a speaker/negotiator, Ibrahim Haji, making an attempt to establish linkage between the present and the past conflicts. Clan conflict among the Somalis is a continuous or a repetitive process. Conflicts recur every now and then and people often draw comparison to stress a point. It is, therefore, very common for an elder negotiator,
through this artistic expression, to suggest that the present conflict has link with a past one. The use of the following proverb in the peace negotiation by Ibrahim Haji suggests that if the clan had fought bitterly during the previous conflict (which they did not), the present conflict would not have come:

43. "Haddii Eygaygii Hore aan ka Dagaalamo, Keyga Dambe la ma Dileen"
("If I were to fight when my earlier Dog was killed, the present one would have been safe")

Ibrahim Haji told me that the proverb means the present aggression has roots in the past.

In the same meeting I also observed that an elder negotiator, Mahat mued, suspected that the aggressor in the current conflict enjoyed the support of some other clans as he (the aggressor) enjoyed in the past conflict. Therefore, both the current and the past conflicts happened because of that illegal and vicious support. The message is that unless the supporter gives up, there will be no solution to these conflicts. The speaker used the following proverb;

44. Waxaa la yiri; "Saddex kaa ma Tagaan."
"Maral Mawd og."
"Gaajo guri og"
"Gardarro Garab og"
It is said; “Three will never leave you alone;

(Disease that knows Death)

(Hunger that knows Home)(devoid of food)

(Aggression that knows supporter)

According to Mahat, the proverb means some of the things affecting our lives would not leave one till they accomplish a mission. For example, a chronic disease that will eventually kill, a famine where there is no food security and violation against one’s right supported by some hidden forces. Mohamed Ibrahim of Bute Location also used this proverb when he accused another clan of supporting the enemy clan.

The Abuduwaq and the Abdalla peace negotiation at Garmagalla location I attended on 12th December, 2005, I deduced that proverbs are also used to summarize what has been deliberated on in the peace meeting. The proverbial summary could be uttered by either the elder (chairman) of the meeting after he listens to all the speakers, or alternatively an elder would talk for a long time then, in a way of summing up or concluding his speech, cites one or two proverbs which are relevant to the points he has made.

The chairman of a peace meeting I attended at Kasha Location on July, 2005, Mr. Riye, felt that most of the speakers said the same things but in different words. As a way of concluding, he uttered the following proverb:
45. "Oodd'a Qaadid iyo Jiidid, waa isla Gurigeyn."

"To lift the ‘ood’ or drag it is just the same, so long as you are taking it home."

Uriye explained that the proverb means achieving the goal is the most important thing, no matter which way you adopt to achieve it.

Many occasions I also observed the Kenyan Somali speakers using the proverb to embellish or beautify their speech. According to my analysis as I followed the deliberations of the peace meetings, among the Somalis, speeches that contain any proverbs tend to be deemed authentic and attractive to the audience.

This, however, does not mean that proverbs used to embellish speeches do not have deeper meaning or are solely used for this purpose. In fact, all proverbs have the effect of embellishing the speech, while at the same time all of them add meaning to it. The effect of the embellishment is felt immediately by the audience who murmur or sometimes yell out and engage in noisy discussions when a speaker uses a series of proverbs to embellish his speech. Let us examine the following verbs uttered in said meetings which, apart from their sagacity (wisdom), are mainly used for speech embellishment:

46. "Madax meel kasareysa, oo la salaaxo maleh."

(No part of human body is above the head)
47. "Maroodi Takarta Saaran ma Arko"
(An Elephant does not feel the Flees on Him)

48. "Shimbir Duulduul Badan, Af Libaax Bay shab Tiraaahdaa."
(A bird that flies frequently, lands in a Lion's Mouth).

riye interviewed on 11th July, 2005 gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows;

The first proverb means the most important part in the human body is the head.
The second proverb means a fool, however big, never recognizes his weaknesses.
The third proverb means a person, who does not take precautions, will land in problems.

Witnessed negotiators also use proverbs to add more weight to their argument.
Many Somalis seem to trust the wisdom in the proverb more than they do in normal plain speech. Someone, for example, would talk at length and argue an issue but apparently would only feel satisfied that he made his point when he uses a proverb. Likewise, it seems the listeners would understand the issue better and take the speaker seriously when he supports his argument with proverbs. I witnessed some proverbs being used for this purpose in a peace meeting I attended on 3rd August, 2005. The peace meeting was called to mediate the two sub-clans of Adengeri and Yahye following the killing of a member of Adengeri by a member of Yahye clan. The diseased, Mr. Abdullahi, was killed because his relative had raped a
Abdullahi was killed because the rapist had gone into hiding. But we should note that, among the Somalis, an act of crime committed by an individual member is taken as committed by the whole clan and, therefore, any member could be a victim of revenge. In the meeting, a speaker by the name Khalif painstakingly argued that the affected families of the sub-clans that are in-conflict are the ones to bring out the real bone of contention, so that the seed of discord is really debated and a lasting solution reached. Khalif, however, almost failed to convince the gathering of what he meant and was confronted with a series of questions. He finally saw the need to add more wisdom to what he was saying and invoked the following proverb:

49. “Laba biyo Isla maquuratay meel ay iska daareen iyagaa og”

(“Two who together went deep in water, know where they touched one another”)

The proverb, which according to Khalif, means it’s the warring sides that really know their bond of contention, convinced the meeting that it was really the families that know what went wrong between them.

During peace negotiations, the Kenyan Somali proverbs are used for comic relief. The use of the proverbs as comic relief is necessitated by the fact that negotiations usually take very long hours because Somali customs demand that every elder sent has to be given a chance to express his views. Negotiations are usually steered by the elder of the clan or the clan that feels it has been offended. The Host
called the owner of the Gogosha, literally meaning the one who spreads the "weddings" for the guests. The hosting elder has to provide the participants with meals, especially plenty of tea. Tea, among the Somalis, is a meal without a fixed time. “Any time is tea time” may apply to the Somali way of taking tea more than it does to any other community. The Somalis have also stock of proverbs on tea and consumption. For example;

50. “Shah iyo Waranba meel ay maraan ma waayaan”
(A cup of tea and a Spear never miss a place in the body)

51. “Shah wakhti ma leh”
(Tea {taking} has no time)

stated by Sheikh Garat interviewed on 11th July, 2005, the meaning of the first verb is that however much one’s stomach is full, he/she can still take a cup of tea, same as a spear can also pierce the body. The second proverb simply tells us that “any time is tea time”.

During long peace meetings, it is natural for people to get tired or visibly lose interest in some topics, arguments or proposals. This is the time that a skilled speaker turns to proverbs that have got some comic effects. Proverbs of this type are usually preceded by a short story to show the circumstances that brought them about. One such comic relief, which I really felt, happened as I was
participating in a mediation effort between Mohamed and Ali clans of Adendhere at the location of Danyere Division on 14th November, 2005. As we sat for hours, participants felt tired and bored. One elder by the name Gure Mara’ade stood up and started narrating the following story:

Once there was an elder who was participating in a peace meeting. The meeting took very long and the elder had a running stomach. He felt the need to go and answer a call of nature but he doubted this and thought it was just gas. He tried to release the gas silently but it became excrement and everybody heard the noise and saw him defecating in the midst of the meeting. People got shocked and asked him what happened and why he was doing that. The elder then uttered:

*iska wata fadhigiinna; “Waxaan dhuuso moodahayey, ayaa xaar igu noqdaye”*

just continue with your meeting “What I thought was just gas became an excrement”

After the story, everybody laughed and became attentive and I felt the effect of the comic relief. The elder then quipped, “We were suffering from the same disease of the character in the story because everybody thought the meeting would be brief but has taken longer than we expected. What we thought “was just gas has become excrement”.

This is an example of anecdotes used to relieve tension and lighten up the moment in peace negotiation meetings. So the proverb has both comic effect and deeper meaning.
11.2 Religious Perspective

Religious sentiments expressed through proverbs are another method used to resolve clan conflicts. Religion is used to sensitize the meetings into bringing positive results. Most of the peace meetings are started with a prayer in the local language. The prayers are mostly relevant to the subject matter or the agenda of the meeting. The language of the prayer is condensed and poetic. Proverbs feature prominently, mainly as a way to support the agenda of the meeting and to convince the negotiators to agree. Some of the common prayer proverbs include:

Ilahha nagayeelo "Xabbaddii kal iyo Mooyo dhexdooda ka baxaday"
May Allah make us like the grain that escaped the crash of the Kal and Moyo.

52. Waxaa la yiri "Muslim u taamoow, Allah ha kuu Tobiineeya"
(It is said, "assist Muslims, God will Assist you")

Iqane Aden who used these proverbs in a peace meeting held at Quq and whom I interviewed on 5th October, 2005 gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows;

First proverb prays for the clan to escape from all catastrophe like the case of that piece of the grain that we sometimes find save and intact after all other grains were rushed. The meaning of the second proverb is very straightforward: assist Muslims and God will assist you.

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Strong stick used for bounding the grain.
Wooden container used for bounding the grain.
The prayer is said by the most elderly and religious person in the meeting.

Some of the peace meetings I participated also start with a short and precise sermon from an elderly Sheikh. An example here is a peace meeting I attended in wajir on 2nd December, 2005. The Sheikh usually quotes from relevant Islamic scriptures in view of the subject of the negotiations. The quotation normally comes from the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the prophet Mohamed (SAW).

In the introductory sermon, the preacher refers to proverbs that have got religious sentiments which urge Muslims to resolve their conflicts peacefully. The following proverbs strongly featured in the preaching sessions of the peace meetings I attended during my research:

53. Waxaa la Yiri “Ninki Muslim Dariqa ka gooya, Ilaah baa dariiqiisa gooya”
   It is said; (Whoever blocks the ways of the Muslims, Allah blocks his way”)

54. Waxaa la yiri; “Boholo Hadimo ha qodin, haddaad qoddana ha dheerayn, ku dhici doontaana ma ogide”
   It is said; (Don’t dig trenches for others, but if you must dig, don’t make them too deep; you don’t know whether it will be you who will fall in.)

According to Aden Yarrow interviewed on 15th August, 2005 the meaning in the first verb is that whoever that robs Muslims, God will punish him. The second verb means you should not sabotage humanity, it may turn against you.
Aden Yarrow further informed me that this kind of short sermon is meant to solemnize the meeting and remind negotiators of their religious obligations to reconcile the warring clans and finish disputes in an amicable way.

3.1.3 Blood Compensation

Another effective way of settling clan conflicts among the Kenyan Somalis is through paying blood compensation or Mag as it is called in the vernacular. This method is usually utilized effectively when murder is committed. When a member of a certain clan kills a member of another clan, the affected clans negotiate for compensation of the blood of the deceased. The protocol followed, as explained by Aden Omar interviewed on 16th August, 2005, in this exercise is clearly defined in the customary law as well in the Islamic Sharia (see Quran).

The process starts with what is known as sabeenxir (Apology) which is in the form of a very small amount of money (as little as 20 shillings) or a sheep paid out by thegressor. This is followed by Xabaalqodde (Burial expense) as estimated by the elders and depending on who was killed. This is paid by the family of the killer to that of the deceased. After that, the closest kinsmen of the person who actually delivered the fatal blow, who are known as “Die-paying group” or in the local language Magwadaag are supposed to pay 40 camels to the Magwadaag of the deceased. This process is known as Rafisa, literally meaning “Wallowing” symbolising the act of rolling on the ground by the diseased when he/she was stuck by the killer. Finally, the process of the compensation is completed with the payment of 60 camels known as Magdher which literally means “long compensation”
by the killer clan to the bereaved clan. This amount of compensation is, however, only applicable where the victim is male. The blood compensation for a man is 100 camels while for a woman it is 50 camels. This arrangement for blood compensation is what the Islamic Sharia ordains.

When I enquired why a man’s blood should be 100 heads of camels and a woman 50, Sheikh Abdirashid gave me two reasons:

First, men die in conflicts more than women. To discourage this, Islam raises the blood compensation of men to 100 camels. Secondly, according to Islamic teachings, man is responsible for feeding his family. Therefore, the killing of the breadwinner is more devastating and expensive than the killing of the partner (woman) who is a dependant. In other words, the family would suffer more when the husband is killed and for that reason his blood compensation is double that of his wife.

These blood compensations are, however, selectively used depending on who the offender is. If, for example, members of same clan kill one another the compensation is a very lenient one. During my research, I witnessed a case in Balambala where two men of the same sub-clan fought and one of them died in the process. The two men were called Guled and Abdirahman. Guled was the deceased, while Abdirahman was the murderer. The relatives sat down and negotiated. They critically considered the issue of the blood compensation and in the process agreed
that since the killing involved close kinsmen the compensation which would be hundred camels be reduced to only four.

I have also noted that if the conflict is between two major clans both negotiation and religious approach are employed. Then this is followed by full blood compensation or the paying of the Mag.

There are, of course, dissenting voices to this blood compensation arrangement. The non-Islamists and modern ideologues see this as an outright violation of women's rights.

There are also other lesser compensations, which the community recognizes for solving clan conflicts. For example, someone wounded by an enemy spear has to get one she-camel. This is known as Qaalinbireed, literally meaning “the she-camel of the iron (the spear).”

Rape, as I said earlier, is regarded as serious as killing. However, when rape happens within the clan the punishment is lenient. The rapist is supposed to pay four head of cattle only. This is drawn from the marriage contract of “Nikah” or “Meher” which according to Somali context is usually four head of cattle. The implication here is that the copulation is four heads of cattle.
4.4 Tying of the Culprit to a Tree

Not all disputes are resolved by mere compensation. Sometimes clans negotiate and elders agree that culprits or the instigators of conflicts be rounded up and beaten up. On many occasions, the culprits are tied up and hanged on a tree; then a fire is put under their feet. Elders interviewed some of them victims, lament that this is a very painful punishment and it is greatly dreaded. They add, although state law discourages this method of punishment, it is sad that the practice, at this day and age persists among the Somalis- albeit in decreasing frequency. Proverbs support the use of physical punishment as a way of solving clan conflicts. The following proverbs are good examples:

55. "Waxaa la yiri "Qaniinjaa, Qariinjaa kaa bujisa."

It is said; (Biting relieves biting)

56. Waxaa La Yiri; "Dab ninkii ku Gubtaa, dambaskiisa ka leexda"

It is said; (He/she who got burnt in fire, runs away from its ashes)

According to Gure who was interviewed on 14th November, 2005, the first proverb means a culprit is dealt with according to the crime he committed. The second verb means once a culprit is punished, it is unlikely for him to repeat the same crime.

4.5 Ostracization

The last recognizable method, but not the least used by this community to solve in conflicts, according to my research, is ostracization of the clan or individuals
who have shown bad conduct or behaved in a manner that has breached the prevailing peace. This ostracization is known as Takoor or Duwid and the clan or individuals who are outcast might assume the name Midgaan if it is not revoked in time. The clan or individuals ostracized suffer considerably because they are barred from participating in all social activities, including negotiations. They cannot also marry from the clan, neither are their daughters married. When they are treated this way, the community believes that the instigators of conflicts or those who sow the seeds of discord will learn a lesson. The Kenyan Somali proverbs reveal the existence of this type of punishment. Let us consider the following proverb:

57. “Takoor Talo ma leh”

(An outcast has no advice to offer)

Dikadir Sheikh interviewed on 21st December 2005 says the proverb means a disgraced member of the society has no voice in the community affairs.

2 Consolidation and Implementation of Peace Resolutions.

Leaders, Saman Ali and Ahmed Sheikh interviewed on 13th December, 2005, and 11th July, 2005, respectively and others on different dates agreed that there are many ways to consolidate and/or implement resolutions that are reached in the Kenyan Somali peace meetings, but the six major ones are:

- Cease-fire truce
• Combined committee of elders from the warring clans and also related clans.

• Swearing (both religious and customary)

• Cursing

• Punishment

• Accord

The elders explained the items as follows:

3.2.1 Cease- Fire Truce

The first step to safeguard the fragile resolutions against violation is to declare a cease-fire. The peace meeting announces the cease-fire once agreed upon and it takes effect immediately and is spread very fast through word of mouth. Locally, this is called Hubdhigid which literally means "putting down the firearms." Usually both parties take extra caution not to break the cease fire. This way the enmity is forgotten with time and peace prevails among the clans.

3.2.2 Combined Committee of Elders from Warring and Related Clans

In many peace meetings, when negotiations are over and peace accord is endorsed, a combined committee of the elders is formed and given the mandate to oversee the implementation and enforcement of the resolutions. Sometimes the meeting
mandates another friendly clan or clans to add some elders to the committee. This joint committee is required to disseminate all information pertaining to the terms of the peace that was agreed upon. It is also mandated to talk to violent groups and use with the government law enforcement agencies. Peace committees usually hold immense power because the government recognizes them and supports their activities. With the help of this committee, peace is, therefore, maintained.

3. Swearing (Both Religious and Customary)

Swearing of the elders representing the warring clans before they leave the negotiation venue is another method employed by the Kenyan Somali society to make sure that all what has been agreed upon is implemented. The swearing of the elders is in two forms; one of them is religious, where the representatives swear in the name of Allah that they will never back off the resolutions. This is administered by the most learned Sheikhs in the meeting. The other one is a customary one and is an oath. This oath taking is considered a very serious ritual because it is believed if it is broken, the consequences could be very devastating. Oath, for example, is taken in the name of the animals slaughtered, especially the Sabeen, which is believed to possess some magical powers. Another form of oath taking is an open and loud pronouncement by the swearers that “if the peace solutions are broken with their full consent and knowledge then all their wives will automatically become divorcees”. Someone taking oath may also utter:

58. “Qodhey iyo xerada”

(I take oath at the pain of losing my manhood and property.)
Saman says this means that the oath taker is saying that if he does not fulfill what he promise, the clan can castrate him or take away all his property. It also means saying "I may have no regret if Allah takes away my manhood and property".

Alternatively, the person taking the oath may pronounce, \textit{Aabbahay Gadaashii ayaaan calool Galay} (I am a child born out of wedlock.)

Saman told me the meaning here is that if the swearer violates the peace, then the clan should consider him like a bastard and never entrust him with any other clan issues.

\textbf{3.2.4. Cursing}

Another method used to safeguard the peace resolutions is cursing whoever breaks the peace agreement. Cursing, among the Somali, is believed to have serious consequences on the person cursed. In fact, if a member of the community is befallen by a misfortune, people first consider the misfortune as a curse. It is, therefore, normal for the people, as they discuss the misfortune of a member, to ask one another: who cursed him or her? Proverbs reveal this fear. Below is an example:

\textit{59.\textquoteright Nin Habaar Qaba, Ma Hodma\textquoteright}

(A cursed person will never succeed.)
According to Ahmed Sheikh the proverb means God will not elevate the cursed to prosperity.

The cursing process which is conducted before the negotiators leave the venue is carried out in a very formal way. For example, one person, usually the eldest, leads the gathering in cursing whoever might dare break the truce and the chorus continuously chants the word Amin or Inshallah.

2.5. Punishment

Peace resolutions are also protected by way of agreeing on a certain type of punishment for the violators. Punishments vary. Some of the common ones include punishing the peace violators by slaughtering their most important and cherished livestock among their animals. The animals that are cherished and which are the targets for the exercise are, for example, the burden-camels and/or the milch-camels. In the event of carrying out this type of punishment it is usually done collectively by the elders who comprise all representatives of the clans. This is done to deny the victim of any claim of compensation on a particular person or order.

Another method of punishment that is meted out to the peace violators is to force them to pay double the amount of the normal blood compensation. If, for example, the mag of a man killed was 100 camels (as is normal), whoever re-ignites the
sashes after peace resolutions would pay 200 camels for a man killed and 100 camels for a woman. Saman and Sheikh agree that this method, through its huge and punitive fines, discourages the would-be aggressors from flouting the peace resolutions.

126. **Accords**

Peace accords reached in the negotiation venues are themselves used as strategy for implementation and guarding the peace resolution against violation. The peace accord is usually strongly worded and is shrouded in such metaphorical allusions to mean symbolically none is expected to violate it. The peace accord is sometimes declared as *Ballan* literally suggesting an agreement that no one can violate. The *Ballan* has also a religious meaning in Islam that anyone who violates it has gone astray and stands condemned on religious grounds. The community, through proverbs, acknowledges the religious symbolism in the word “Ballan”. See the following proverb:

60."*Ballan Darro, waa diin Darro*"

(A person who violates accord, is like an unbeliever)

Ahmed states that the proverb means whoever does not respect what is agreed upon is somebody who does not believe in Islam.

On the other hand, elders are required by the society’s customary laws to keep their promises and never violate any accord of peace that is reached under the “Tree”. This demand, therefore, leaves no room for any individual elder to abdicate his
responsibility of working for effective implementation of all peace accords. The demand to fulfill promises and accords is portrayed in the society's folklore materials, especially in the proverbs. In the following proverb, it comes out that once an elder reaches an agreement or enters Ballan with others, it is final and irreversible.

61."Qowl Nin weyn ka dhacay, waa qolof geed ka dhacday"

(An agreement between elders is irreversible, and like a tree cannot repossess the leaf it has shed).

According to Ahmed the proverb means peace accords are final and no one should dare to violate them.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we have been able to discuss the functions of the proverb. The Somali proverb has many functions but for purpose of this study we, limited ourselves to the function of solving conflicts. The chapter has discussed the various traditional approaches to solving conflicts. These include use of religion, negotiation, blood compensation, physical punishment and ostricing the culprit. We have also outlined the six main functions of the proverbs during the negotiations. The chapter finally explored the various methods of consolidating the fragile resolutions reached at the peace meetings. We shall now move on to analyse the language of the proverb in relation to conflict resolution.
CHAPTER FOUR

Language of the Proverb

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I tackle objective (ii) of this study by discussing the language that is used in communicating messages in the Kenyan Somali proverb. Again, this discussion is limited to showing how the language used is suitable to communicating messages on peace and peace resolution. This is the focus of my study. Language in this chapter is broadly used and does not mean language per se but the style used in the proverbs. Thus, I have assembled material from different sources to build the argument for the discussions in this chapter. For example, I have used material from documented sources in literature. I have also used material from discussion interviews with the respondents, active discussions from peace meetings and discussions with my supervisors. I discuss the following elements of language and how they are used in the peace mission in this community: poetic language, register, imagery, sound effects, rhetorical devices, repetition, word-play and parallelism. In my discussion, I will pay close attention to the way the community uses these devices as this is what my theoretical framework demands.
According to my observation of the way the proverb is constructed linguistically by the artists, the proverb employs poetic techniques. As we shall see later in this chapter these techniques include imagery and some sound effects like alliteration and rhyme. Some elders I interviewed among them Jigre and Dekow consented the view that the Kenyan Somali proverb uses poetic language to heighten its message. In other words, among the community members and according to these elders, the language of proverbs is strictly poetic in nature. We, however, understand that it is not only the Kenyan Somalis that have proverbs with poetic formulae. In his discussion of the language of the proverb in Akan community, Boadi says:

A speaker often selects a particular proverb or striking metaphor because he wishes to embellish or elevate his message with a poetic dimension, or demonstrate to his opponent his superior sophistication, education, eloquence or sensitivity in the use of his language (Boadi, 1981:184).

Consider the following proverbs in which the language used is poetic:

62. "Intaadan wax Falin, ka fiirso".
(Think before you leap)

63. "Dheefey ku Aaway, Dhibaan Dhinacaa ka jiraa".
(Where are you success? I am behind difficulties)
64. "Hilib waa nin waayey, iyo nin dabada saarsaartay".

(Some people could hardly get a small piece of meat, while others wore loads of it on their backs).

According to Dekow and Jigre the first proverb simply means that you should think before you leap. The meaning of the second proverb is that for one to succeed in life, he/she must face challenges before he/she enjoys the fruit of his/her hard work. The third proverb has a background story that goes this way: once hyena saw monkey and thought the two red spots on monkey's back were pieces of meat he was carrying. Hyena ran towards monkey wishing to catch monkey and eat the two pieces of the meat, but monkey, sensing danger, ran away very fast and climbed into a tree. Hyena, who naturally could not climb trees, stood under the tree looking up at the monkey who was sitting on a branch at the top of the tree and uttered the proverb. The proverb is used for speech embellishment; however, it is so indirectly critical of the greedy members of the community.

The Somali versions of the above proverbs reveal the poetic nature of the Kenyan Somali proverbs. For example, all the proverbs above utilize the device known as iteration. In the first proverb the words falin and fiirso alliterate, while in the 2nd proverb the sound [θ] - a labial dental fricative, appears as the initial sound in the first, forth, and fifth words. In the third proverb, the first and the second clause of the proverb rhyme through the words waayey and saarsaartay.
Another important aspect of the language of the Kenyan Somali proverb is that, unlike the Somali poems, proverbs are composed without the influence of foreign languages. In other words, while poems heavily borrow from other languages such as Arabic and English, proverbs do not borrow words from other languages.

The choice of words is usually restricted by the poetic nature of the proverbs, especially the strict demand for alliterative sounds. Words, however, pour out as they fit the context and the topic for discussion. The words used in the proverb are usually drawn from the immediate and familiar environment. Let us consider the proverbs below as examples of what we have said:

65. "Caana Daatay, Dabadooda La qabtaa"
(Do not waste milk, however little)

66. "Hubsiinyo, Hal baa la siista"
(For confirmation of an issue, is worth a she-camel)

67. "Banaankiisa mare, maradiisa geed ma gabsaado".
(Whoever walks in the plains, never gets his clothe torn by trees)

Dabar interviewed on 29th July, 2005, gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows:
The first proverb means that you should save the little you have. The meaning of the second proverb is that you should confirm issues you are told before you act. The third proverb means that if one avoids controversy, s/he will stay free of it.

These proverbs, first of all, do not borrow foreign words. Secondly, words are drawn from the immediate and familiar environment. For example, see the word “milk” in the first proverb, the “she-camel” in the second proverb and the words “plain” and “ee” in the third proverb. These objects are all tangible in the pastoral life, they are commonplace in the lifestyle of this community.

The words that are used in the proverbs also suit the context and the occasion that necessitated the use of the proverb. In the first proverb, for example “milk” is used as an imagery to urge the addressee to salvage the little he can rather than risking the whole milk in the wooden - vessel (AMEEL) getting spoilt. The proverb is used when someone is advised to control the situation before it is out of hand, as milk is a commodity that appeals to the psyche of the nomad better than any other food in this particular context.

The unique aspect of the Kenyan Somali proverbs that may also affect the language of the proverb is that the proverb’s origin and the composer are always unknown. In
other words, the Kenyan Somalis do not know how their proverbs came into being and actually who coined them. This affects the language of the proverb because, as we have seen earlier in some proverbs we have analysed in Chapter three, many proverbs take an introductory clause so as to make clear that the composer is unknown. For example, quite a number of proverbs use or have to take an introductory clause like: "The Somali said" or "it was said" or sometimes are preceded by a short story as an attempt to explain the circumstances that have influenced the composition of the proverbs.

In fact, whether in the present or not, it seems that almost all Kenyan Somali proverbs are able to take the introductory clause. Examine the following proverbs:

68. Waxaa la yiri, "Waxaa day, waxa ka sokeyana day".

It was said, (Look at that, but also look at this (closer thing).

69. Somali waxay Tiri "Indho way usiku hurdaan, ee ma kala hurdaan"

Somali said, (Eyes sleep together, but cannot sleep separately)

I ali interviewed on 1st September, 2005 explains that the meaning of the first verb is that one should not only think of the future, but should also think of the
The second proverb stresses the kinship bond of the clan members. The meaning is if a member is befallen by a calamity, the whole clan should feel for him.

The anonymity of the origin and the composer of the proverbs have a positive effect on this artistic expression of the Kenyan Somali community. For the first one, there is a common belief that proverbs can only be composed by the hidden - wise men in the society, but can be consumed and used by every common member of the community. So these wise-men who are, in the first place, the product of the community left the wisdom in the proverbs for the consumption and benefit of their community without the claim to ownership or copyright. Therefore, any attempt to identify a composer of a proverb will violate the basic principles of its creation.

Secondly, the anonymity of the composer and origin of the proverb makes the proverb genuine and valid for all times and generations. In fact, in the event of someone claiming to have composed a proverb, that proverb is dismissed out of hand by the community. This kind of situation happened during my research when an elder by the name Aden Ahmed gave me the following proverb:

70."Ilma kabaraay, isma kediyaan".

(The chickens of a guinea fowl never fail to recognize one another)
The elder, Aden Ahmed says the proverb means two brothers will never fail to recognize one another.

But after I recorded and adopted it, the elder told me the proverb was of his own making. Later when I told other people that I have a proverb from so and so they laughed at me and said a proverb whose composer is known is subject to scrutiny and does not qualify to be called a proverb. Later I tried to use it in a peace negotiation meeting and even announced the name of the composer, but some elders in the meeting openly criticized the composer whom they called “a maangaab” a short sighted man who behaves like a child. They then treated the proverb with all the contempt it deserved and advised me never to talk of a composer of a proverb in the world of the Kenyan Somalis.

Most of the Kenya Somali proverbs are grammatically constructed in simple present tense or past simple tense. The persona here is usually third person singular or plural. The introductory clause, however, though in past tense, has a connotation of present tense. Linguistically it seems to be saying that although the Somalis uttered the proverb long in the past, it is still addressing the contemporary generation.
 Imagery 

The most striking aspect of style that is used in the Kenyan Somali proverb is imagery. Literally, imagery is the technique of employing figures of speech that ring pictures to the minds of the audience. Finnegan says: "Proverbs are rich of imagery or succinct expression on which more elaborate forms can draw" (Finnegan 389). The Somali elders, in their formal peace negotiations or in any other casual interactions where proverbs are used, heavily rely on imageries. The use of imageries in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is so prevalent and condensed that it sometimes becomes very difficult for non-native speakers to fully comprehend the proverbs in the translation. The following proverbs are good examples:

61."Qowl nin weyn ka dhacay, waa Qolof geed ka dhacday".
(An agreement among Elders is irreversible, and like a tree it cannot repossess the dry leaves it has shed).

71."Dantaada, maqaar Ey baa loogu seexdaa."
(For your interest (even) sleep on dog’s hide.)

72."Nin yar intuu geed ka booduu, talo ka boodaa."
(A young man leaps over important issues, the same way he leaps over trees.)

73."Bakayle intuu bur ku jiruu, bur kale raadsadaa."
(A hare looks for another hide-out before it vacates the one it has.)
74. "Buda qabe iyo biyo qabe, waa ay isku baahanyihiin."

(A person with bounded maize only, and the one with water need one another.)

Ahmed Sheikh interviewed on 31st July, 2005, interpreted the proverbs as follows:

The first proverb means peace accords are final and no one should dare to violate them. The meaning of the second proverb is that one is urged to look after his interest. The third proverb means an inexperienced person makes many blunders. The forth proverb means secure another job before you leave the current one. The meaning of the fifth proverb is that people need one another.

These proverbs, in their original version are far much removed from the translation in terms of conveying the vivid picture of the images like qowl (agreement), Qolof (dry leave), Geed (tree), Maqaar (hide), boodaa (leaping) and others as used in the proverb. Other proverbs collected in this research that use imagery abundantly include:

30. "Nafta caano, nolashana biyo"

(The soul is milk, the life is water.)

31. "Hal baruur ah baa, baruurya badan qurmisa"

(One piece of rotten meat spoils many pieces of fresh meat) (if stored together).
48. "Shimbir duulduul badan, af libaax bay shab tiraahdaa".
(A bird that flies frequently lands in a Lion’s mouth.)

56. "Dab ninkii ku gubtaa, dambaskiisa ka guda."
(Who got burnt in fire, runs away from its ash)

75. "Nin is faanshey, waa Ri’ is nuugtay.”
(A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks itself.)

76. "Nin abeesa koriyow, Adigaa u aayi.”
(Whoever brings up a viper, will reap the fruit)

77. "Geedkaad labaatan jir beerataad, lixdan jir harsataa.”
(The tree you plant at the age of twenty, you enjoy its shade at sixty.)

Shaboy Noor interviewed on 16th November, 2005, gave the meaning of the proverbs as below:

The first proverb means life is impossible without water and milk. The second proverb means some animal deseases are contagious. It also means evil friends have bad influences. The third proverb means a person, who does not take precautions, will land in problems. The fourth proverb means once a culprit is punished, it is unlikely for him to repeat the same crime. The fifth proverb means that the self-praiser is an object of redicule. The meaning in the sixth proverb is that one is urged to invest wisely. The seventh proverb means work for your future.
Among the Somalis, proverbs with condensed images seem to be rated higher than the ones with plain ordinary imagery. This is one of the literary aspects that the Somalis share with many African communities, for example the Akan. Of this Boadi says: “Proverbs are assigned to places in the hierarchy not on the basis of their actual content and validity but on the quality of their imagery. The more concrete and unusual the image, the higher the proverb rates” (1981: 185)

The use of imagery in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is varied and numerous. But for the sake of this study, we would like to discuss the three main components of imagery, namely: Metaphor, Simile and Personification that are commonly employed in the proverbs.

Metaphorical images that figuratively refer to things, events and so on are commonly employed in the Kenyan Somali proverbs, as is evident in the following proverbs:

5. "Tolkaa Xaar buu, ku cunsiiyaa".
(Your Kinsmen can make you feed on faeces).
48."Shimbir Duulduul Badan, Af Libaax Bay shab Tiraahdaa".

(A bird that flies frequently, lands in a lion’s mouth).

Men Osman interviewed on 11th December, 2005, told me that, the first proverb means the clan’s interest always comes before that of a member. In other words, the clan can cause one to do what it wants. The second proverb means that a person who does not take precautions will land in problems.

In the first proverb, the speaker employs the words “Feed on faeces” as metaphorical illusions to refer to the power of the kinsmen to make a member of the clan do disgusting things. Likewise, the image is metaphorically used to reveal to us the member’s total dependency and subjection to the clan. In the second proverb, “the bird and its habitual flight are employed as a metaphor to warn those members who, because of their instability, may cause themselves harm.

Another poetic feature that the Kenyan Somali proverb portrays is the device known as simile. Many proverbs that are selected for analysis in this study employ this device. The following proverbs serve as examples:

20."Naagtaada oo kaa warrantay, waa Maradaada oo kaa warrantay"

(A wife divulging the secrets of her husband; is like clothes revealing the secrets of the body).
32. "Nab iyo Naar, baa La Simay."

(False allegation is like Hell fire,)

60. "Ballan Darro, waa Diin darro."

(A person who violates accords is like an unbeliever"

75. "Nin is Faanshay, Waa Ri’ is nuugtay."

(A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks itself).

Our field informant, Sheikh Abdiwahab, who I interviewed on 12th January, 2006, gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows:

The first proverb compares a wife revealing the secrets of the husband with that of personified clothe capable of talking to reveal what it covers in the body. The second proverb means that there are some allegations that the clan or the person cannot tolerate, just as fire cannot be tolerated. The third proverb means that whoever does not respect what is agreed upon is somebody who does not believe in Islam. The fourth proverb means a self-praiser is an object of ridicule.

Among the Kenyan Somalis, the simile, as a stylistic device, is very crucial in conveying the message and the wisdom in the proverbs. It helps the listener draw deeper meaning from the objects compared. The images of "Clothes revealing secrets" of the body, for example, helps us imagine how bad one’s wife is if she...
avulges family secrets. On some other occasions, however, the simile in the Kenyan Somali proverb assumes a more complicated form. The complication is brought about by the fact that the two things that are compared are too far apart. For example, while one object and its action is clear and within our expectation, the other one is both strange and unpredictable. This sometimes confuses young people or non-native speakers in grasping the real meaning and wisdom carried by the proverb.

For example, the proverb "A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks itself", is one that uses subtle simile. While "a person praising himself" is understandable, comparing that kind of man with a goat sucking itself is not comprehensible. The hidden meaning is that one should refrain from self-praise otherwise he may look foolish in public eyes. The proverb ridicules those who praise themselves.

Another device under imagery which is common in the Kenyan Somali proverb is personification. In the proverbs, sometimes human mannerism is assigned to animate things. According to the Somali proverbs, things that take human personalities include animals, objects or some abstract entities. The human behaviours at these things assume, for example, include talking like people, and engaging in intelligible and intelligible actions.

The following proverbs utilise this technique:

Once Success was asked; “where are you Success?” and it replied, “I am hiding behind difficulties.”

44. Waxaa la yiri, “Saddex kaama Tagaan,”
   “Maral Mawd og”
   “Gaajo Guri og”
   “Gardarro Garab og”

It is said, “Three things will never leave you alone”.
1. (Desease that knows Death)
2. (Hunger that knows Home (empty)
3 (Aggression that knows supporter)

78. “Libaax Nin Ganay iyo Nin Galaday kala ogsoon”.
(A lion can differentiate between one who threw a spear at him and the one who supported him (did not throw at him).

According to Mahat and Aden Yarrow interviewed on 15th August, 2005 the meaning of the first proverb is that for one to succeed in life he/she must face challenges before he/she enjoys the fruit of his/her hard work. The second proverb means that one of the things affecting our lives would not leave one till they accomplish a mission. For example, a cronic desease that will eventually kill, a famine where
There is no food security and violation against one's right supported by some hidden
forces. The third proverb, means that one should be able to differentiate between
lies and friends,

In the first proverb "Success" is being asked a question as a human being and tells
the enquirer her whereabouts, while in the second proverb all the abstract nouns
like "Disease", "Hunger" and "aggression" are treated as living things. The third
proverb, the "Lion" is personified so as to be able to distinguish among the attackers
the one who actually wants to kill him.

4.4 Sound Effects

Under this sub-title of sound effects we shall discuss the following four main
features in the Kenyan Somali proverbs:

- Alliteration
- Rhythm
- Rhyme
- Onomatopoeia
4.1 Alliteration

Alliteration which is a poetic device that requires same consonant sound to occur at the beginning of at least two words in the proverb is a strictly observed feature in the Kenyan Somali proverbs. Almost all proverbs that have been analysed in this thesis employ this technique. In other words, there should be at least two words in each clause of the proverb that has to begin with a selected consonant or vowel sound. If, for example, the alternative sound of a proverb is the consonant “G” that would at least come back twice or more in the proverb. This is shown by many proverbs analysed here for example:

21.“Goob loo Galbado, Gaari baa leh”
(A place where a man can call home is where “Gaari” stays.)

17.“Rabbow ama Roob keen, ama Riinow Keen”
(Oh! Allah either bring rain, or Rino (Man)

38.“Gacan wax qaadma Baratay, Haddii La Goyana Gumudkaa Dhaqaaqa.”
(A hand that used to steal, even if amputated, the stump will try).

According to Sheikh Abdiwahab, Gure Mara’ade and Sa’adìa Muktar interviewed on 4th January, 2006, 14th November, 2005 and 8th August, 2005 respectively the meaning of the proverbs are as follows:
The first proverb means a habitable and enjoyable home is synonymous with a good wife. The popular belief is that a good wife is equal to a good home and bad wife is equal to a bad home. The meaning of the second proverb is that either of the two- Rin or Riinow, can solve a problem (for more explanation refer to page 65). The third proverb means that old habits die hard.

The first proverb, as we can observe, alliterates on the consonant sound /g/ which is the beginning of three words Goob, Galbado and Gaari in the original version of the proverb. The alliterative sound of the second proverb is the consonant /r/ which occurs three times at the beginning of the words Rabbow, Roob and Rino.

The last and third proverb also alliterates on the sound /g/ where, as we can see, the words Gacan, Gooyana and Gumudkaa all start with the same letter sound /g/.

This device is known as Higaad and according to the Somali community any authentic piece of literature must observe this feature and follow it strictly. In other words, except for narratives, all other folklore genres of the Kenyan Somali strictly employ this device.

Alliteration, in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is however only applicable to the words in the proverb which have readily assignable meanings. These are nouns and verbs
which are viewed as suitable for alliteration. Functional words such as conjunctions and, particles such as wuu (an affix denoting gender) and imperatives like “u” (an imperative affix) do not qualify for alliteration. Alliteration as a sound device has marked effect on the proverb. Other than the wisdom that proverbs offer, alliteration offers the listeners or the audience the beauty of the proverb as an art. According to popular Somali beliefs, alliteration helps the listeners evaluate the authenticity of the proverb and form attitudes toward certain things or objects discussed in the proverb.

The following proverb:

79. “Qaaxa nin Quud Qarsaday, Qalataa”
(TB kills the lone eater)

Ali interviewed on 22nd December, 2005 says the meaning of the proverb is that you should share your wealth with the members of the community or suffer the consequences.

The alliteration of the consonant “Q” in the proverb signifies the miserable situation of people who do not share their wealth with their brothers and sisters in the community. Sharing is an important obligation in African communities. In fact, it is linked to life itself. Mbiti (1969) observes that to an African, “I am because we are, and because we are therefore, I am.” Therefore, according to African beliefs, which Kenyan Somalis share, there is no room for individualism. Sharing is, therefore, a duty to be respected and executed by anybody who calls himself/herself an
Based on this attitude towards sharing, the alliteration makes the listener form a negative attitude toward those who do not share with the society. It also makes the listener reject certain anti-social behaviors that have punishable consequences.

According to Hirsi Ali (interviewed on 19th October 2005, another function of alliteration is mnemonic. It helps the speaker to reproduce the proverbs they memorized earlier in their lives. The argument here is that since the Kenyan Somali proverbs start with a letter, usually a consonant sound which is maintained throughout, it helps the speaker to memorize the proverbs.

4.2 Rhythm

Since we have argued that the Kenyan Somali proverbs use poetic language and have a lot to share with other folklore materials, especially the verse, we have to explain the rhythmic patterns of the proverb. Rhythm, by nature, is such an elusive device that strikes one in any poetic piece of literature, but it is always difficult to give a tangible and concrete definition. This view is supported by Deutsch when she says, "Rhythm is as natural as breathing, the ebb and flow of tides, the return of the seasons, it is immediately experienced and recognized with pleasure, but it eludes definition" (Deutsch 1958:128).
In close observation on the nature of the Kenyan Somali proverbs, one will realise that the stressed syllables which normally mark the rhythm of the proverbs fall at most equal intervals. This regularity of the occurrence of stressed syllables helps rate the pattern of the “beat” of the proverb and brings out the rhythm of the proverbs. Some of the proverbs studied here indicate the stressed syllables and their regular intervals e.g.

80. “Hal Hungiri Weyn, Geela Hortii Bay Dhimataa”.
   (A greedy she camel dies before others)

75. “Nin is faanshay, waa Ri’ isnuugtay “.
   (A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks itself)

Sarah Noor interviewed on 2\textsuperscript{nd} September, 2005 says the meaning of the first proverb is that too much greed can cost you your life. The second proverb means the self-praiser is an object of ridicule.

The two proverbs, there is a pattern of rising tones with the stressed syllables marked, while there is falling tones with the unstressed syllable (unmarked) and happens at equal intervals. The rising and falling of tones as a result of the stressed and the unstressed syllables create a regular alternation of high and low pitches in the proverbs. This helps the speaker to persuade the audience. He is also able to hold the attention of the audience this way. The art of using proverbs is, therefore, crucial in peace making and negotiations.
4.3 Rhyme

Another equally important device that is utilized in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is rhyme. The most common rhyme that almost all the proverbs use is the kind known as "internal – rhyme". Rhyme may be defined as the repetition of the same sound at recognizable and regularly recurring intervals. In the case of the proverb, unlike the poems, there are not many lines to rhyme. However, within the proverb the words rhyme. This is what is known as "leonine or in-line rhyme." In the following examples, this kind of rhyme is extensively used.

81. “Af Joogo, Looma Adeego”
(A present person is not advocated)

82. “Ani nin yiri, dad iska bixi”.
(A man who said “myself” has excluded himself from others)

83. “Beentaada hore, runtaada dambe ayey u darantahay”.
(Your earlier lies affect your later truth).

Ibrahim interviewed on 10th August, 2005 interprets the proverbs as follows: the first proverb means one should not talk on behalf of a person who is present in the peace meeting. The second proverb means though a member is required to play his communal role, he is, however, also entitled to his private affairs. The meaning of the third proverb is that one should be consistent in his transactions with the members of the community.
we carefully consider the original version of the above proverbs we can notice that the first proverb the word Joogo rhymes with the word Adeego, while in the second proverb the words Ani, Yiri and bixi all have ended in rhyme. In the third verb the word Beentaada rhymes with the word Runtaada, while Hore rhymes with Dambe and the word Ayey with Darantahay.

Discussing the leonine or in-line rhyme of the proverbs, John Miles Foley takes the following South Slavic proverbs as an example:

• “Sve mispijo, na jednu smislijо”

(He pondered all (the possibilities) and settled on one).

As we can observe, there is in-line rhyme in the above proverb i.e. the word mispijo” rhymes with “smislijо”. In his explanation of the characteristics of the South Slavic proverbs which, like the Kenyan Somali proverbs, use leonine rhyme and with reference to the above proverb, Foley makes the following remarks: “This expression exhibits many of the structural and acoustic features associated with proverbs in South Slavic. Once again, we have leonine or in-line rhyme, as always at the ends of the four-and-six-syllable cola. (Foley, 1999:42)”.

Some other Kenyan Somali proverbs, however, have got different kinds of rhyming scheme. These are the proverbs which use more than one object in their comparison
to stress a point. In this case the rhymes are in consecutive, couplets or even triplets. The following proverbs stand as examples:

44. Waxaa la yiri, saddex kaama tagaan;

"Maral mawd og"

"Gaaja guri og"

"Gardarro garab og".

It is said, three will never leave you alone:-

(Disease that knows death)

(Hunger that knows home (empty)

(Aggression that knows supporter)

We explained earlier the proverb means some of the things affecting our lives would not leave one till they accomplish a mission. (for details refer to page 151)

4.4 Onomatopoeia

Very common stylistic feature used in Kenyan Somali proverbs is onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia stylistically is a sound device in which word sounds are chosen to actually suggest their referents. In other words, some words in the proverb are used to imitate the sound of the things that the speaker or the user of the proverb is referring to. All the words in bracks in the following proverbs actually imitate a sound and may, therefore, be regarded as onomatopoeic.
12. "Ili Geedka (Dhabi) ma aragto".
(An eye cannot detect the thorn that pierces it).

27. ‘Shimbir Habeen (Duulay), wixii duuliyaa jira’
(A bird flies at night for a reason)

29. “Ku (Dhufasho) ma ogii, ka dhihid ma leh”
(No need to negotiate, just to hit)

34. “Nin naag (eryeyso), iyo rati rati (eryahayo), midna kaama gudaan”.
(A man incited by a woman and a he-camel running from another will not stop till they run over you.)

The respondent, Eno Ali, interviewed on 22nd December, 2005 explains that the meaning of the first proverb is that though the eye is entrusted to see any danger to the rest of the body, sometimes the eye itself fails to detect the thorn that pierces it. The second proverb means a person, who does not take precautions, will land in problems. The third proverb means you cannot negotiate with somebody who has already settled in your land. The fourth proverb means that the intensity of a conflict depends on what instigated it.

In the first proverb, the word dhabi (to pierce) helps us feel the sound of the thorn that pierces the eye, while in the second proverb the word duulay (to fly) suggests
n the sound and the movement of the frightened bird that is forced to fly from
the enemy in the dead of the night. In the third proverb, the device signifies both the
movement and sound of the action of the offended, who feels the only option is to
hit dhufasho, while the last proverb gives us the vision of shape, movement and
sound of the incited man who was compared with a he-camel making some frantic
effort to escape from the wrath of another he-camel.

Sonatopoeia usually gives us a vision of shape, movement, colour and so on and
its impact on the listener of the proverb can be powerful. In this way the Somali
people are able to draw comparison and influence the people to appreciate the
importance of peace.

5 Rhetorical Devices

In most African societies, the adult speakers are fond of employing rhetorical device
and the Somali community is no exception. A. Boadi, in his discussion of Akan
verbs states:

In Akan society, rhetoric is a far more important part of adult’s linguistic
equipment than in most other societies. A mature participant in a dialogue or
public discussion always strives to use vivid language because his audience is
continually making folk-literary analysis of his speech (1972:186).

terms of its literary meaning, rhetoric is the art of employing language in a
rnt way so as to deliberately impress the audience. To achieve his goals, the
istor, therefore, uses or employs some techniques like hyperbole, understatement, illusions and so on.

Hyperbole is a common rhetorical device in the Kenyan Somali proverb is hyperbole. Negotiations go on and elders speak in turns, using proverbs abundantly, the element of exaggeration in the proverbs becomes more evident. Hyperbole comes out clearly when the proverb compares two things. This device abounds in the following proverbs:

20. "Naagtaada oo kaa warrantay, waa maraada oo kaa warrantay"
(A wife divulging the secrets of her husband is like clothes revealing the secret parts of the body)

5. "Tolkaa xaar buu ku cusiiyaa"
(Your clan can make you feed on faeces)

32. "Nab iyo Naar baa la Simay"
(False allegation and hell fire are likened)

75. "Nin is faanshay, waa Ri isnuugtay"
(A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks herself.

84. "Door Bilcaan, Daafana Rageed baa ka Roon"
(The dullest of men is better than the brightest of women)
Abdiwahab and Aden Osman interviewed on 12th January, 2006 and 11th December, 2005 respectively gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows:

The first proverb compares a wife revealing the secrets of the husband with that of sonified clothe capable of talking to reveal what it covers in the body. The second verb means the clan’s interest always comes before that of a member. In other words, the clan can coarse one to do what the clan wants. The third proverb means there are some allegations that the clan or the person cannot tolerate, same as fire not be tolerated. The fourth proverb means the self-praiser is an object of ridicule. The last proverb reveals the community’s prejudice against the female member of the society. It means that men, in comparison with women, rate higher in all social spheres.

All the proverbs above, the element of exaggeration is quite obvious. For example, reality, clothes do not talk so as to reveal the secret parts of the body, while no person will ever feed on excreta. Therefore, though the point is made, the issue grossly exaggerated. This reveals the extent to which society can dictate and effect an individual’s course of life. For example, the society may compel one to “eat excreta” is comparable to father who lost all his sons in inter-clan war and he is asked to forget about the enmity and opt for peace.
Hyperbole is usually common not only in proverbs but also among other African 
African genres. Alembi (2003) in his discussion of songs used in the Kenya multi-
party elections campaign of 2002 detects hyperbole in the following song:

“Galileo, great mind,
Einstein, genius mind,
Newton, extra ordinary mind,
Bill Gates, brilliant mind,
Kibaki, mastermind,
Uhuru, never mind.”

Alembi (2003:81) then remarks: “Of course there is hyperbole here but the point is 
that Kibaki should be the choice as he ranks highest among the thinkers of 
the world.”

The effect of hyperbole in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is tremendously felt by the 
listeners. It helps them focus on the subject matter and be persuaded by the 
argument presented by the speaker. When a member of the community is, for 
example, told that your clan “can make you feed on excrement” the point is made. It 
implies a member has no option other than what the clan chooses for him.
In the same note, the hyperbole reflects the attitude of the speaker towards certain characters in the proverb. For example, when the speaker says "the dullest of men better than the brightest of women" it shows his prejudice against women.

Another rhetorical device that is often employed in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is illusion. This is a device in which the speaker of the proverb makes indirect references in his proverb. The indirect reference, however, assumes various forms. For example, an individual or a thing may be indirectly referred to as either positive or negative. A member behaving badly is referred to negatively, while one behaving well is referred to positively. The renderer of the proverb uses the references to persuade his listeners to make a stand against bad social conducts that may lead to conflicts in society. On other occasions the artist urges community members to emulate behaviour that ensures peace and stability, not only within a clan, but also across the clan.

Illusion is effectively utilised in the following proverbs:

31. "Hal Baruur ah baa, Baruuryo badan qurmisaa."
(One piece of rotten meat spoils many pieces of fresh meat "if stored together").
47. “Maroodi, Takarta Saaran ma arko”.
(An elephant does not feel the fleas on him).

54. “Bohola Hadimo Ha Qodin, Hadaad Qoddana ha dheereyn, ku dhici Doontaana ma ogidee”
(Don’t dig trenches for others, but if you must dig, do not make them too deep, for you don’t know whether it will be you who will fall in)

38. “Gacan wax qaadma Baratay, Haddii La Goyana Gumudkaa Dhaqaaga”
(Even if amputated, the stamp of a hand that used to steal will continue to steal)

79. “Qaaxa nin quud qarsaday, qalataa”
(TB kills the lone eater)

80. “Hal Hunguri Weyn Geela hortii Bay dhimataa”
(A greedy she-camel dies before others)

77. “Geedkaad Labaatan Jir Beertaad, Lixdan Jir Harsataa.”
(You enjoy the shade of the tree you plant at twenty when you are sixty)

73. “Bakayle intuu Bur ku Jiroo, Bur Kale Raad Sadaa.”
(A hare looks for another hide-out before it vacates the one it has)
Respondents, Nuurto Ali and Sa’adie Muktar interviewed on 18th December, 2005 and 8th August, 2005 respectively gave the meaning of the proverbs as follows:

The first proverb means some animal deseases are contagious. It also means evil minds have bad influences. The second proverb means a fool, however big in body, recognizes his weaknesses. The third proverb means you should not sabotage unity, it may turn against you. The fourth proverb means: old habits die hard. The meaning of the fifth proverb is that you should share your wealth with the members of the community or suffer the consequences. The meaning of the sixth proverb is that too much greed can cost you your life. The seventh proverb means you need to work for your future. The last proverb means secure another job before leave the current one.

The first proverb, a bad member of the community is alluded to negatively in that his rotten behaviour he can infect the good members of the community. In the second proverb a bad leader is alluded to negatively in that he does not see his stakes. The third proverb indirectly warns the deceitful member of the society at whatever he is doing behind the scenes may turn against him, while in the fourth proverb allusion is evident in the sense that negative behaviours like stealing unchangeable and, therefore, one should not practice it in the first place. The fifth proverb alludes negatively to a mean person whom it warns that he is likely to die of B, while the sixth proverb alludes negatively to the greedy in the community of
omit warns that he/she will die before others. The second last proverb, however, conveys positively to a hardworking member of the community who invests when he is young to reap at old age. The last proverb uses positive allusion in which it urges members to emulate some positive trends like “hard work” and “foresight”.

As we have observed, the Kenyan Somali elders who are the mouthpiece of the community when it comes to peace negotiations and the art of oratory, use allusion to enrich the meaning of the proverbs and stimulate the listeners to infer hidden meanings that are not explicitly stated.

Repetition

The most outstanding stylistic feature which gives the Kenyan Somali proverbs a marked structure is repetition. This repetition develops the proverb and clarifies meanings. The repetition, however, does not seriously affect the length of the proverb. Despite the frequent repetition, most of the Kenyan Somali proverbs are relatively short and in fact most of them are not more than a sentence. Repetition within the Kenyan Somali proverbs assumes different forms. One of the most prevalent kinds of repetition which most of the proverbs employ is word repetition. This is shown in the proverbs below:

17. “Rabbow ama roob keen, ama riinow keen”

(Oh! Allah either bring rain or Riinow (man))
20. “Naagtaada oo kaa waraantay, waa maradaada oo kaa warrantay”
(a wife divulging the secrets of her husband is like clothes divulging the
secrets of the body)

22. “Nin gu’ kaa weyn, gu’ baas kaa weyn”
(A person older than you by less than a year is older than you a whole year)

85. “Nin ku caayey, Tokaana waa caayey”
(One who has abused you has also abused your clan)

31. “Hal Baruur ah baa, Baruurya badan Qurmisa”
(One piece of rotten meat spoils many pieces of fresh meat “if stored together”)

According to Noor A, Ibrahim interviewed on 10th December, 2005, the meaning of
the first proverb is that either of the two: Rain or Riinow, can solve a problem. The
second proverb compares a wife revealing the secrets of the husband with that of
personified clothe capable of talking to reveal what it covers in the body. The third
proverb means whoever is older than you for even a few months deserves respect.
The forth proverb means a member and his/her clan are inseparable - whatever
affects one also affects the other one. The fifth proverb means some animal deseases
are contagious. It also means evil friends have bad influences.
rd repetition is clear in the above examples. In the original version of the verbs there are words which are repeated. For example, in the first proverb the word Keen is repeated twice, while the word warrantay is reiterated in the second verb. In the third and fourth proverbs the words Gu’ and Caayey are each repeated twice respectively. In the last proverb the word Baruur is also repeated.

Having observed this, we should also further note that all the repeated words are ones with readily assignable meanings. These are nouns, and verbs. We should also take note of the fact that the repeated words happen to come from the two different parts (clauses) of the proverb.

This kind of repetition is very crucial as it enables the listener to grasp the deeper meaning of the proverb. For example, in the proverb (one who has abused you, has abused your clan) the repetition is done purposely and with all intention to convince the listener to take sides. The proverb does not simply say that “the one abused you did the same to your clan”, but rather the word abuse is used twice to stress the meaning. This helps the listener to imagine the gravity of the action of the abuser which does not only affect the individual, but the whole clan. The repetition in the proverb also convinces the listener that he is part and parcel of the clan or in other words a person and his/her clan are one and the same.
other form of repetition in the Kenyan Somali proverbs that is worth noting happens when, for example, the proverb is in multiple forms. That is when a single verb tries to tell us some two or mostly three characters behaving the same way in different situations. The following proverb is an example:

44. Waxaa la yiri, “Saddex Kaama Tagan -
“Maral Mawd og”
“Gaaja Guri og”
“Gardarro Garab Og”
It is said, “Three will never leave you alone”
(Disease that knows death)
(Hunger that knows home (empty))
(Aggression that knows supporter)

We stated earlier, the proverb means some of the things affecting our lives would leave one till they accomplish a mission, (for details refer to page 151). If we look this proverb carefully, we notice that the word “og” (Knows) is repeated at the end every part of the three parts of the proverb.

Another notable form of repetition in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is repetition of ideas. Although an idea may be expressed in different language and contexts, it may be repeated in the proverb. For example, in the proverb we have seen above there is the idea that some things may never leave you alone till they meet their
jectives which is repeated. The personified aggressors' acts are repeated throughout in the three multiple parts of the proverb. That a disease, which is going to kill you, hunger that is aware of your abject poverty, [that you do not have food at home] and an aggressor who gets support would not leave you in peace, an idea that is repeated in the proverb.

Let us consider the following proverb as another example;

86. Waxaa la yiri “Saddex Kaama Tagaan”

“Kuftin Low”

“Kalan waalid”

“Kabasho subaq”

It is said, “Three will definitely catch up with you ”

- (An injury of the knee)
- (A curse of the parents)
- (A sip of cooking oil (fat))

di Ali interviewed on 1st September, 2005, says the proverb means some of the things that happen to us in the prime of our lives would catch up and affect us in old age. For example, an injury in the knee, the curse of the parents and poisonous food or drink you took.
again the idea of some deeds catching up with the victim in old age, though one might have thought that he or she was safe, is repeated in all the three components of the proverb.

**Word-Play**

Word arrangement is also another device which plays an important role in building the Kenyan Somali proverbs. Due to the demands of alliteration, the speakers usually arrange the words in the proverb in a way contrary to the syntax of the daily-spoken language. This arrangement of words by the proverb users, however, strictly depends on the different dialects of the Kenyan Somali clans. Each clan has its own way of formulating its language and this affects the proverb.

As we hinted earlier, the Kenyan Somali proverbs are usually very short and in reality most of the proverbs have two clauses only. One main clause which is the main idea in the proverb and a support clause which is also very important in effectively sealing the wisdom meant to be conveyed in the proverb. Although the content of the proverb of the Kenyan Somali is strictly oral, when subjected to writing the proverb, it is separated by a comma. This is derived from the fact that when a proverb reciter speaks out the proverb he will use a pause to divide the line. This is in line with the contention of the exponents of our theoretical framework, the poetics, particularly that strand of Tedlock. Tedlock, for example, lays emphasis on organization of the performers' speech into lines in accordance with
pauses in the performance. He further states that this will help to mark intuation in the performance itself, a feature that helps the audience to locate artist's areas of emphasis.

Parallelism

Another literary device of the Kenyan Somali proverbs is “parallelism”. Parallelism is process of progressive substitution of comparable units of utterance. The most outstanding type of parallelism in the Kenyan Somali proverbs is the type known as positive/negative parallelism”. This is a pattern in which one clause of the proverb which is positive is paralleled by a negative one. The following proverbs portray parallelism:

87. “Somali Been Way Sheegtaa, Laakiinse Been ma Maahmaado”
(Somalis tell Lies, but do not tell lies in their proverbs)

35. “Balaaya ka Hortag Bay Leedahay, Laakiin ka Dabatag ma Leh”
(A catastrophe can be prevented, but cannot be reversed)

69. Waxaa la yiri; “indho way isku hurdaan, ee ma kala hurdaan”
It is said; (Eyes sleep together, so an eye cannot sleep alone as the other one is awake)

Our respondent, Aden Omar, interviewed on 16th August, 2005, states that the first proverb reveals the Somali people’s trust in their art. The meaning here is that,
people may tell lies in their ordinary speech, they never lie in the proverb. The proverb advises one to avoid situations which may bring irreversible consequences. The third proverb stresses the kinship bond of the clan members. The meaning is, if a member is befallen by a calamity, the whole clan should feel for

we can observe from the above examples, in every proverb the first part (clause) which is positive or affirmative is paralleled by a negative clause which comprises the second part of the proverb. This type of parallelism helps shape the sentence of the proverb. Krikmann explains how this type of parallelism affects the sentence of the proverb: “The parallelist forms in the proverb are remarkable in a way that they substantially and in different ways change the logical and the trope structure of a sentence”. (Krikmann, 1998:77)

our discussion of parallelism, we cannot afford to leave out the kind of parallelism common among the Kenyan Somali Proverbs which is known as synonymous parallelism”. This is the style in which the meaning in both clauses of the proverb is paralleled. In other words, it is the meaning in both parts of the verb that is given equal proportion though the situations paralleled are quite different and far apart. Let us look at the following proverbs.
72. “Nin yar intuu geed ka booduu, talo ka boodaa”.
(A young man jumps over issues, the same way he jumps over trees).

88. “Ninkii dhulka ka naxariista, samadaa looga naxariistaaa”.
(One who is kind on earth finds kindness in heaven.)

The field informant, Saman A. Ali interviewed on 13\textsuperscript{th} December, 2005, told me that the first proverb means an inexperienced person makes many blunders. The meaning in the second proverb is that God will be kind to the person who is kind to creation.

In the first proverb, “jumping over issues” in terms of meaning is paralleled with “jumping over trees”. The proportion of the action of “jumping” in both clauses of the verb is equally paralleled. In the second proverb, “the kindness on earth” and “the kindness in heaven” in the two clauses of the proverb are in terms of meaning paralleled.

Anomymous parallelism also has a negative strand in which a negative meaning in the first clause of the proverb is paralleled by negative one in the second part of the verb. See the following two proverbs:
89. “Nin aan shagaysan, shah ma cabbo”

(Who does not work, does not drink tea)

36. “Nin wixii jooga aan ka talin, wixii soo socdana kama taliyo”.

(The person who cannot solve the present problem, cannot solve the future one)

Hassan Ahmed interviewed on 3rd December, 2005, says the first proverb means hard work pays. The second proverb means an elder who cannot resolve the current conflict is not expected to resolve a future one.

Apparentely, what we have observed in synonymous parallelism could be logically summarized like this:

“yes, then yes and if no, then no” or

affirmative versus affirmative, negative versus negative

Synonymous parallelism is another type of parallelism which the Kenyan Somali proverb utilizes. This is the style in which two opposing meanings in the two parts of the proverb are paralleled. This is elucidated in the following proverbs:
90. “Il meel dhow bay dhacdaa, dhegna meel dheer”
(An eye (sight) falls short distance; an ear (word of mouth) falls long distance)

91. “Nin dhididey wuu dheefsadaa, nimaan dhididinse dheef ma leh”
(One who sweats does reap, one who does not sweat does not reap)

Aden interviewed on 4th December, 2005, explained the first proverb simply as hearsay spreads faster than the real news. The meaning in second proverb is that one's prosperity depends on how hard he/she works.

In the first proverb, the functions of the “eye” and “ear” are paralleled. This is signified by the two verbs “short” and “Long”. In the second proverb, the “hard worker” and the “lazy” one are paralleled using the verbs “does reap” and “does not reap”.

Referring to this device, Krikman Avvor in his discussion of the Rhetorical and semantic planes of Estonian proverbs says:

The antonymous mode of parallelism is best expressed in cases where it is marked by the affirmative or negative form of a verb or adjective, by a pair of words, with one component denoting the ‘contradictory’ negation of another, or by antonyms marking various measures and qualities (big/small, many/few, good/bad etc) (Krikman, 1998:78)
9 Conclusions

In this chapter we have been able to discuss the language of the proverb. In other words, the chapter explored the various stylistic features of the proverb as it is used as a conflict resolution tool. Items discussed include the language, register and images employed by the Kenyan Somali proverb. Others include sound effects such as alliteration, rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhetorical devices, repetition and parallelism. In doing so, we managed to appreciate how the language of the proverb is manipulated so as to achieve the desired results. Having analysed the language aspect of the proverb, we shall now proceed to discuss the performance of the proverb in relation with its conflict resolution message.
CHAPTER FIVE

Performance and Oratory

1. Introduction

The chapter discusses the performance of the Kenyan Somali proverb and the oratory skills of the Kenyan Somali performers. In doing so, the chapter tackles the objective (iii) of this study. Performance is an important element in any genre of oral and, especially so in the Kenyan Somali proverbs as they are used to communicate peace messages. The primary objective in the discussion of performance of the proverb is to unearth how the proverb is told in the process of solving a conflict. Our focus will be on some performance techniques which are verbal and non-verbal. We shall, specifically discuss vocalization levels, gestures and facial expressions.

The chapter also discusses the oratory skills of the performers or negotiators in the peace meetings. Oratory skills are highly regarded in Africa and the Somali community is no exception. In examining the oratory skills of Somali speakers in peace meetings, we look at the persuasiveness of the speaker as he uses the verb, the voice modulation, posture, gesture, and mastery of vocabulary, ability to use figures of speech and interpolation of stories and proverbs. We also discuss
rhetorical devices used during the speeches. Below is the discussion beginning with performance especially with verbal elements.

1. Performance

1.1 Verbal elements – vocalization

Vocalization of oral performance means variation in delivery. This means oral materials are either sung, intoned, recited or spoken. The Kenyan Somali proverb is spoken. However, speaking of the proverb is distinguishable from ordinary speech. This is mainly because of the poetic nature of the proverb. During the performance of the proverb, poetic techniques like externalizing the sounds and heightening of tone are effectively employed. This allows the performance of the proverb to assume a special form which significantly marks it out as distinct from ordinary speech. Performing/speaking (not intoning, reciting etc) the proverbs as an art form is not accidental but is done with a purpose and has some implications. In other words, performing the proverbs affects the minds of the audience and activates its actions. During the peace negotiations, the proverb is performed in order to solve conflicts.

1.1. Audience participation

The Kenyan Somali audience plays a very crucial role in the performance of the verb. In most of the peace meetings I attended, the audience, for example, joins the clapping, blowing the shell or conch, beating the drum and so on. There is an
The interaction between the audience and the performer during peace meetings whereby the proverb is immensely used. In some peace meetings, I observed, the role of the audience sometimes becomes very crucial to the extent that a speaker/performer is able to proceed to address the meeting without the assistance of the audience. A peace meeting I attended at Ijara, for example, a speaker started his contribution with a proverb and asked a member of the audience to keep on saying some reference words, as he (speaker) delivered his points. The speaker Jigre Mohamed used the proverb below for the purpose:

92. “Halhays ma tihid ee Halbixis Baad Tahay, (ee igaqabo)”

(An orator you are, but keep my reference words)

According to Jigre the proverb means that though I know you are an orator who airs meetings; excuse me for the time being I have chosen you to keep on saying normal “reference words”.

The proverb is used to pre-arrange somebody in the audience who sits directly opposite the speaker whose task is to emphasize all important points made by the speaker. In that peace meeting at Ijara, as the performer, Jigre, was speaking, during out proverbs, that particular audience, Qaloosh Ahmed kept interjecting with the following reference words:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somali version</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hii – ii</td>
<td>Yes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagaag</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na’am</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iska dheh</td>
<td>Say it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cajaa’ ib</td>
<td>Wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waa sidaas</td>
<td>It is that way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>li hii</td>
<td>Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma’aragtay</td>
<td>Have you seen it (you have)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lailaah</td>
<td>No god but Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bismillaahi</td>
<td>In the name of Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahu Akbar</td>
<td>God is great</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These reference words are chanted spontaneously and only few of them may be utilized in a given occasion.
Another interval at which the audience participation comes out clearly is when the
former deliberately leaves a proverb incomplete for the audience to complete. The
former, for example, speaks the first part of the proverb and omits the second
part for the audience to add the missing part. In a peace meeting in Balambala, I
witnessed elder Bunow using the following incomplete proverb:

93. "Waxaa la yiri Nin kuu digay.............................."

It was said "someone who warned you........................."

The audience completed the proverb by saying in chorus:

"kuma dilin"

(has not killed you)

According to Bunow the proverb means that if one is threatened with death and fails
take precaution, the consequence is that one is killed due to one's foolishness or
negligence.

As we observe, in the performance of the Somali proverbs, both the roles of the
audience and that of the performer are very crucial. The mood of the performer
affects the audience and likewise the mood of the audience affects the performer. An
active audience gives the performer the required motivation to maximize his
Also a good and skilled performer makes his audience respond to his performance through his manipulation of oratory skills.

12. Non-verbal elements

5.1.2.1 Gesture

One of the most outstanding features of performance of the Kenyan Somali proverb gesture. Somalis use gestures liberally when performing a proverb. Gestures are made by using sticks, hand and the head. I will begin by explaining how different types of sticks are used as a tool to make gestures.

The use of a stick to make gestures to convey messages is common in the performance of proverbs. Being pastoralist, Somali men carry a stick all the time. The stick is used for various purposes including herding the animals. It is also used as a weapon for self-defense. On top of these uses, the stick is an effective tool of making gestures in the peace negotiations where proverbs play a central role in the communication process. Most of the speakers in peace meetings come with their sticks, not to use them as a weapon, but to use them to make the necessary gestures as they address the meetings. If a speaker leaves behind his stick (which is rare), he borrows one from a friend when his turn to talk comes. Customarily, there are, for example, different types of sticks recognized for various uses. These are, for example, Dhenged and Shabiiq for caning errant children and wives, Samey and Salmoow for religious purposes and as symbols for the power of kings, sultans and
There is also **Hangool** used both for shaking the acacia tree to bring down its
ds known as **Abqa** for goats and corralling (fencing) for the animals. One
mon use for these types of sticks mentioned above is to make gestures during
performance of the proverb. For example, when an elder speaks a proverb such

43. “Haddii Eygaygii hore aan ka dagaalamo, kayga dambe lama dileen.”
(If I had fought when my previous dog was killed, the present one would have
been safe)

wesaid earlier the proverb means the present aggression has roots in the past.

es uses **Garoon** or **Bakoora** to make gesture by violently shaking the stick, while
inting at the imaginary enemy of the clan. This gesture is made by using these
tes of sticks because the proverb has a war-like message, while the sticks of
roon and **Bakora** are themselves used as weapons during the inter-clan fightings.

o add just another example, this type of gesture becomes evident when a proverb
ike the following features in the peace meeting:

29. “Ku dhufasho ma ogii, ka dhihid ma leh”
(No need to negotiate, just to hit)
we stated before the third proverb means you cannot negotiate with somebody
who has already settled in your land.

The proverb urges clan members to hit back at the enemy; therefore, the gesture of
ruaging is made by using Garoon or Bakoora because they are used for fighting.

Sameey and Saalimoow are used to make the relevant gestures by clan leaders as
they stress unity or pass decisions through proverbs. The clan elder, for example,
passes his palm over Sameey gently as he calls for the clan unity in the following
proverb;

6. “Far keliyihi fool ma mayrto”
(one finger alone cannot wash a face)

As said earlier the meaning of the third proverb is that a united people can do better
than an individual.

In some other occasions, the gesture is made such that the sameey falls and hits
the ground gently and repeatedly like the mallet. This happens as the sultan passes
a verdict after chairing a clan meeting. The gesture is made through a carefully
selected proverb like this one;
4. "Gunnimo, geeri baa dhaanta"

(Death is better than slavery)

As we noted earlier the first proverb means instead of accepting oppression timidly, one should fight and die for his/her freedom.

The proverb is performed as the sultan endorses the clan decision to fight against oppression by another clan.

Other gestures that are made by using sticks include the one where the performer places his feet at the ground right in front of him and makes crossing lines. Respondents to my interview, one of them Aden Omar interviewed on 16th August, 2005, told me the drawing of lines on the ground indicates the deep thinking of the performer as he endorses the proverb. In other words, the lines reveal some sub-conscious mental disposition of the performer. The performer draws some straight lines on the ground to stress the proverbial messages. When he is about to finish his speech with a proverb he makes other lines crossing the earlier ones. Finally, as he concludes his speech, the performer wipes out all the lines he drew.
In other occasions, as I observed in the peace meetings I attended, performers, as a way of making gestures, dig a small hole on the ground by using the stick. This is called *Dhul farid*, literally meaning (Scratching the earth) and is associated with a somber mood. Deeply absorbed in the message of the proverb, which is normally a one; the performer stares at the ground in front of him and digs a small hole with the stick. This gesture is used to demonstrate the unbecoming behaviour of the members of the antagonizing clan.

Below are two proverbs which are performed with this gesture.

76. “Nin abeesa koriyoow, adigaa u aayi”

(Whoever brings up a viper will reap the fruit)
54. "Boholo hadimo ha qodin, haddaad qodana ha dheereyn, ku dhici doontaana ma ogide"

(Don't dig trenches for others but if you must dig, don't make them too deep for you don't know whether it will be you who will fall in)

We noted before, the meaning in the sixth proverb is that one is urged to invest wisely. The second proverb means don't sabotage humanity, it may turn against you.

The mood associated with the performer of these proverbs is one of gloom. In the first proverb, the performer scratches the ground making a hole as he stresses the message of the proverb. The proverb is about someone who betrays his mentor. I witnessed the performer of this proverb as I sat among the elders of the Abudawak community. An elder parent used this gesture as he lamented about his eldest son deserted him and refused to assist him in herding the stock. The speaker of the second proverb uses this gesture to portray a sullen mood and warn against sabotage, because the saboteur himself becomes the victim.

In hand or to be specific, the thumb, middle figure and the palms are also used to make gestures during peace meetings where proverbs are performed. The thump and the middle finger are tightly pressed against each other to krack the knuckle.
This gesture is used to call the attention of participants in the meeting whose attentiveness may have been distracted. It is also used to indicate or point at an event that took place a long time in the past. The following two proverbs are usually accompanied by this type of gestures:

94. “Rujaal, Labo Qalbi ma leh!”
(No man has two minds)

95. “Wax tagay, Lama Tiigsado”
(Anything long gone is not pursued)

According to Aden Ibrahim interviewed on 10th August, 2005, the first proverb means no one is capable of planning and executing two issues at the same time. The second proverb means that one should forget about bad experiences in the past and concentrate on present. The first proverb calls for the attention of the participants to the meeting and it is the one in which the thump and middle finger are pressed against each other to krack the knuckle. The second proverb suggests a past issue and the same the gesture as above is used.

Another form of gesture is noted when the palms are rubbed together implying something has completely been destroyed. The foot is sometimes used instead of the palm which is rubbed against the ground to communicate the message that the enemy has been neutralized. The following proverb is used with this gesture:
96. “Cadowgaaga cagta hoosteedaa lagu maqiiqaa”
(Your enemy is crushed under your feet)

Farah Ali interviewed on 20th November, 2005 says the proverb means that in order for one to be saved, the enemy must be crushed. As the performer performs this proverb, the crushing of the enemy is indicated by rubbing the palms together or the foot is rubbed against the ground.

The head is also used as a tool to make gestures in the performances of the Kenyan Somali proverbs. This gesture is the universally known nodding and shaking of the head to signify acceptance and rejection of issues. I noted, as the negotiations are in progress, the head is nodded when the message of the proverb is agreeable and it is shaken when it is unacceptable.

28. “Dagaal wiil baa ku dhintaa, wiilse kuma dhasho”
(A conflict kills a son, but does not bear a son)

As we said before, the proverb discourages conflicts by saying that conflicts only kill the sons of the community, but never produce sons. During the performance of this proverb, the performer nods his head as a sign of approval of the message in the first clause of the proverb, while he shakes his head as a sign of disapproval of the message in the second part of the proverb.
Making of the leg during peace negotiations by the proverb performer is another form of gesture. In making this gesture, the speaker sits torso erect, crosses his legs by putting one leg on top of the other, supporting himself by tying his knees and midst together with his bed-sheet. Then, the top leg shakes as he utters more and more proverbs. The gesture illustrates the deeply felt emotions that the performer is experiencing and the shaking of the leg, as I noted, is involuntary. The gesture is used with the proverbs with more serious and emotionally involving subjects. For example, proverbs touching on kinship ties or the spiritual life of the members of the clan are spoken with the accompaniment of this type of gesture. Here are some proverbs that bring out these emotions and are performed with this gesture:

85. “Nin ku caayey, tolkaana waa caayey”
(one who has abused you, has also abused your clan)

5. “Tolkaa, xaar buu ku cunsiyaa”
(Your clan can make you feed on feaces)

52. “Muslim u taamoow, Allah kuu tabiineeyo”
(Assist Muslims, God will assist you)

53. “Ninkii Muslim dariiqa ka gooya, Ilaah baa dariiqiisa gooyaa”
(Whoever stands the ways of Muslims, Allah blocks his way)
Osman, whom I interviewed on 11th December 2005, interprets the proverbs as follows:

The first proverb means a man and his clan are inseparable. The second proverb means the clan’s interest always comes before that of a member. In other words, the man can coerce one to do what the clan wants. The meaning of the third proverb is very straightforward: assist Muslims and God will assist you. The meaning in the fourth proverb is whoever robs Muslims, God will punish him.

1.2.2 Facial Expressions

Deeply felt emotions are expressed through facial expressions. Proverb performers wear a fierce expression when there is a tense message in the proverb and relax the mood when there are glad tidings and hopes. Performers occasionally scowl at the audience or stare hard at a vacant space in the meeting arena as a way of performing and facially reflecting messages in the proverb. The facial expression of the performer is powerful and affects and influence the audience. A facial expression worn by a speaker of proverbs may make the clan to react angrily and lead to fierce inter-clan clashes. Likewise, a facial expression by a performer in a peace meeting may relieve tension and bring lasting solution to the conflict. The following proverbs are accompanied by facial expressions;

55. “Qaniinjaa Qaniinja kaa Bujasaa”

(Biting is met with biting)
39. “Hadal Daawa ayuu keenaa, ee Dab ma kiciyo”
(Negotiations bring peace, but don’t ignite fire)

97. “Nin daad gaaday, xumbo cus kay”
(A drawing person seeks help from the foam)

As we said earlier the first proverb means a culprit is dealt with according to the crime he committed. The proverb is an equivalent of the English saying: let us talk meaning let us agree. The third proverb means once a man is over-powered he should seek help from all sources.

The messages expressed in these proverbs vary, the facial expressions assumed by the performers also vary. In the first proverb the message is a tense one, for the performer calls his clan to fight back. The facial expression is fierce, appropriate to interpret the subject matter of the proverb. In the second proverb the message is reconciliatory. The performer interprets the mission of negotiation in a veiled message. Negotiators are urged to seize the opportunity to resolve the conflict. The facial expression of the performer, therefore, is one of hope and appeal. The third proverb is a mockery of a member of the clan who disobeys the clan customs and rules and who, in the consequence, is affected by calamity but has no one to assist
The facial expression is a rueful laugh and cruel pity suggesting the helpless state of the rebellious member.

## 3.2. Oratory

Somali oratory skills revolve not only around the proverb, but also around the entire art of speaking. The proverb is, however, distinguished as it is used together with oratory skills in different discourses. Among the Somalis, oratory is seen as a necessary skill in life because it is linked to the success of the individual. A person may, for example, win a case in the traditional “under – the – tree” court simply because of his oratory skills. One can only become a sultan or mediator and settle disputes among clan members, if one is an accomplished orator. For these reasons, and many others that we are going to elaborate later in the chapter, every Somali wishes to be a good orator. A person who may not be a talented orator is even compelled to pretend to be one. This gift of being an orator is most displayed during the clan meetings in peace negotiations.

The meetings usually take place under a tree. The tree is either a pre-organized one shaded with grass or twigs or an impromptu one identified when the need arises. The “tree” among the nomadic community acts like the local court. The speakers of the meetings are invited in order of seniority. The aged take their turn to speak while the youngest elder comes last. Then, finally the sultan delivers the
summary of the main deliberations before pronouncing the verdict. Proverbs recognize the arrangement of speakers in order of seniority. The following proverb is an example:

98. “Weedh iyo Waramba way degdegaan”
(Both the word of mouth and the spear do hurry up)

According to Khalif Ibrahim who was interviewed on 3rd August 2005, the meaning of the proverb is that the best orator, symbolized by word of mouth which is a talent belonging to elderly people, should always be given the first chance to talk in the peace meeting. It also says that when war is inevitable, there should be no delay in fighting (spear hurries up). When I enquired the wisdom behind inviting the speakers according to their age, I was given two reasons: first, it is a sign of respect for the elderly people who are believed to be the carriers of folk wisdom. Secondly, It feared that the younger elder may talk loose and spoil the mood of the negotiation because the Somali people say:

72. “Nin yar inta uu geed ka booduu, talo ka boodaa”
(A young man leaps over important issues, the same way he leaps over trees)

As we noted earlier the proverb means an inexperienced person makes many blunders.

The meeting usually begins with the Arabic greetings of Salamu Alaikum (peace be upon you). This greeting is regarded as religious and it is the most used and
accepted greeting among Muslim faithfuls. Speakers start their address with this greeting to set the ball rolling. It is a kind of set induction where the speaker calls for the attention of the crowd. The participants of the meeting reply in chorus *Wa alaikum Salam* (May peace be upon you also) and dead silence engulfs the environment. Full attention is paid to the speaker who is expected to start his address. The dress code reveals the type of speaker who addresses the meeting. If, for example, the speaker is someone knowledgeable in Islam he wears long veil (plause) called *Khamis* (Kanzu) and kofia. If he is not, then he normally wears a shirt and kikoi. In the traditional Somali society, the speakers used to wear two white canvas sheets but that is not fashionable any more. If the speaker is someone who is eloquent with Islamic teachings, his speech is proceeded by a short sermon called *wacdi*. The sermon could be as short as just saying “Fear your Allah”. The speaker may also quote relevant verses from the holy Qoran and the traditions of the prophet. The short sermon is meant to remind the participants of their religious obligation to maintain peace and tranquility.

After the short sermon comes a thanks giving and flattering of the host of the meeting who is usually the sultan. The speaker thanks the host and his family who serve plenty of tea and food. Tea is served in plenty because it is the local refresher and stimulant. Somalis, as strict Muslims do not drink alcohol, therefore, tea seems to replace the drinking sprees common among other communities. Speakers use
proverbs to flatter the host and his family. He is, for example, called the most generous man in the world and his wife the best of wives. The following proverb is used to heap praises upon the wife of the host:

21. "Goob loo galbado, gaari baa leh"
(A place where a man can call home is where “smart wife” stays)

As we explained before, the proverb means a habitable and enjoyable home is synonymous to a good wife. The proverb refers to the wife of the host, who prepares the tea and the food and calls her Gaari (smart wife).

Thanks giving also come where the speaker is not the first speaker in the meeting. This time when a speaker is invited to address the meeting, he normally starts by thanking the proceeding speaker. He thanks him because, according to him, the speaker who talked before him tackled the subject of discussion very well. A common proverb used to stress this point is as follows:

42. “Hadal nin badiyey ma dhameyn, nin gabiyeyna ma hambeyn”
(A talkative did not ground the issue; neither did the brief one leave anything (for other speakers).

As we stated earlier the proverb means that neither lengthy speeches, nor brief ones may adequately tackle the subject of discussion.
However, this acknowledgement that the previous speaker spoke well and addressed pertinent issues of the meeting is sometimes short lived, because the in-coming speakers immediately contradict themselves. Though one says he agrees with the sentiments made by the previous speakers, he tends to oppose many issues that have been said before him. This habit by the speakers of devaluing, what their predecessors said, though initially they say they support them is prevalent in all the meetings I attended. This is construed to suggest some frantic efforts by the speakers to outsmart one another in the search for good oratory skills.

After thanks giving, speakers proceed to give short historical reflections of the clan. The historical events concentrate on the recent clashes with the enemy; especially battles where the clan won. Speakers proudly talk about their clan’s war prowess in peace meetings. This is meant to instill fear in the opponent clan and create a sense of bravery among the members of the clan. In some of the peace meetings I attended, speakers of Awbuwak clan reflected much on battle fields in which they confronted their opponent Awlyahan clan, while the Awlyahan speakers I listened to in other meetings did the same. The narration of the clan history is sometimes extended to cover the clan ancestors. Speakers, proudly refer to their ancestors, especially the brave and well-known past leaders. The name of the ancestor whom the clan originated from is frequently invoked. The purpose here is to build a strong kinship tie. As part of their oratory skills, speakers also frequently refer to
The clan enemies. The enemy is drawn closer and its preparation to strike is exaggerated. This is meant to mobilize the clan to stay prepared for war any time. Proverbs used for this purpose by the speakers at this juncture include: -

99. “Col hortii, digniin qab”

(Be prepared before the enemy attacks)

As given by Dekow Ali who was interviewed on 11th January, 2005 the proverb means one should be ready and prepared for enemy attacks all the time.

During the speech in the negotiation arenas, voice modulation is an oratory skill that is quite notable. Speakers often try to reach a big mass without assistance from my gadgets like loud-speakers, therefore, the voice pitch is very high. Somalis naturally like audibility and in case a speaker is not audible or he is a soft-spoken person, the crowd will shout and ask him to be loud enough. Linguistic rules of intonation and stresses of syllables are strictly observed. Words or even sentences are stressed and repeated for their meanings.

In the art of speech making, where the proverb is the vehicle through which points are delivered, gestures are used gracefully and appropriately. Clad with their kanzu and kofia, speakers make a variety of gestures as they talk. Speakers use various items within their reach to make the relevant gestures. Touching the kanzu buttons
frequently as they talk, adjusting the kofia every now and then, massaging of the ear and controlling eye contact are some of the common gestures made in the meetings. Other useful gestures employed to display oratory skills include: hand movements, use of “thikri” beads (Rosary), the spear and the sticks.

A conspicuous oratory skill that speakers display as they perform is an apparent use of diction. In other words, language is used appropriately and correctly. Words are used with great care and selectively and put in their rightful place. Speakers have mastered the Somali language vocabulary and use figures of speech at will. Speakers show great ability in the composition of their speech. The speech can be followed easily and it is mostly very persuasive because its delivery keeps on to a systematic method. The speech has an introductory part which leads to the main topical discussion and there after the conclusion and the summary of main points one last. Speakers intersperse stories with their speech. This is a common practice for all Somali orators. Some stories put in the speech are purely meant for relieving tension, while others reflect on some past historical happenings. Stories are blended within the speech for the purpose of comparison. A good Somali orator will narrate two or three stories before concluding his speech. The stories have usually some common characteristics with current topical issues being discussed. For persuasive purpose, stories are embedded in the speech and are left for the audience to compare the events in the story and the one discussed in the meeting. Proverbs are
immensely used in the speeches. The proverb is used for many purposes and has numerous functions but the major one is to appeal to the audience and make points with extra force. The use of proverbs, measures one’s oratory skills. The more the speaker uses proverbs, the highly he is regarded as a skilled orator.

Poems are also thoroughly used in speeches. Sometimes speakers turn most of their speeches into a poem and may only use prose in the introduction and the conclusion of the speech. Poems, unlike proverbs, are not used as a separate item brought into the speech to emphasize points. Poems actually replace the speech itself and they are used for the purpose of enriching the meaning. Many Somalis believe poems used in the speeches come out spontaneously but in the actual sense they are pre-meditated, memorized and brought to the meetings.

The posture of the speakers is worth noting in the discussion of the Somali oratory skills. The body structure also matters in oratory as it gives an added advantage. It is believed that oratory skills naturally dwell in the strongly – built men as opposed to the long – limbed slim ones. In fact, when someone talks well in the meeting, one often hears people calling him a “tall boy like a tree” in praise of his oratory skills.
Speakers avoid being nervous or wearing a haggard face. Instead they keep cool and collected with visible self-complacent. They speak slowly but with dignity. They are attentive and keep on analyzing the logic of their speech for they know the expectation of the audience.

In concluding their speeches, speakers take time to round up the main deliberations. They apparently avoid finishing the speech abruptly without giving the audience a prior hint that the speech is coming to an end. A speaker, for example, may announce many times that he is leaving the stage for the other speakers but continue exploring more and more points and revisits some of the issues he discussed earlier. By the time he actually concludes his address the audience is convinced that the speaker has delivered all that he had.

1.2.1 Use of rhetoric

In its literary meaning and as suggested earlier, rhetoric may be interpreted as the art of manipulating language in a style designed to persuade or impress the listeners. Rhetoric is very important in the peace-negotiation that speakers cannot avoid using rhetoric, no matter what one's vocation in life is. Just as men instinctively acknowledge the validity of logical principle that a thing cannot at the same time be and not be, speakers readily use verbal strategies that men have always used to induce attitudes in others or to prompt others to action. In their attempt to display their oratory prowess, speakers indulge in rhetorical devices and
make use of all kinds of persuasive discourse. In other words, rhetoricians or
speakers distinguish three kinds of rhetorical devices. First of all, speakers use
deliberative rhetoric in which the speaker deliberates about clan affairs e.g. whether
the clan should opt for war or enter into an alliance with other clans and so on.
Here the speakers seek to persuade the audience to act or to accept their point of
view. Some of the proverbs that the rhetoricians / speakers use during the
deliberative discourse include:

8. “Nin tolkii, kama janno tago”
   (A man may not go to paradise because of his clan)

6. “Far keliyihi, fool ma mayrto”
   (One finger alone cannot wash a face)

As we said before the first proverb means a man sacrifices for his clan by
undertaking all that the clan wants him to undertake even if that means disobeying
God. The meaning of the second proverb is that a united people can do better than
an individual.

In the first proverb, the speaker tries to persuade the clan members to go to war. He
uses the proverb to convince even the religious men that they should forget going to
paradise and instead go and kill members of the opponent clan, an action which of
urse will make them miss entry to paradise. In the second proverb, the speaker deliberates upon the importance of having alliance with other clans.

The second type of rhetorical device that the rhetoricians utilize is the forensic rhetoric. This is the rhetoric of lawyers in the courtroom, but in the Somali case it can be extended to cover the speakers under the "tree". This is the discourse that comes out as the speakers seek to defend the action of their clan against another or they simply refute the opponent clan's claims. Its special topics are justice and injustice, and its means are accusations and defense. Proverbs that speakers use for this purpose include:

100. "Seedigaa ha coleysan, walaashaa iskuma hubtide"
(Don’t fight with your brother - in - law because you are not sure (rely on) of your sister)

As explained by Harira Ali who was interviewed on 14th July, 2005, the proverb means when making a judgement on a case, rely on facts rather than hearsay.

The speaker uses the proverb in defence of the brother - in - law who might be accused though he is innocent.

The third type of rhetorical skill used by the speakers is the demonstrative rhetoric. It is the rhetoric of display. In this kind of discourse, the speaker is not so much
concerned with persuading an audience as with pleasing it or inspiring it. There are some proverbs that the speakers use for demonstrative rhetoric. Here is an example,

101. “Calool adayg, waa ciirsi Ilaah”

(To remain strong and never waived, rely on God)

According to Sheikh Garad interviewed on 11/7/05, in this proverb the speaker seeks to inspire the listener to be strong and be steadfast which will lead him to rely on God.

Explaining the art of oratory in Africa, Finnegan puts it this way;

The art of oratory in West Africa is carried, to a remarkable pitch of perfection. At the public palavers each linguist (official spokesman) stands up in turn and pours forth a flood of speech, the readiness and exuberance of which strikes the stranger with amazement, and accompanies his words with gestures so various, graceful and appropriate that it is a pleasure to look on, though the matter of the oration cannot be understood. These oratorical displays appear to afford great enjoyment to the audience, for every African native is a born orator and a connoisseur of oratory, a fact that becomes very manifest in the courts of Justice in the protectorate, where the witnesses often address the juries in the most able and unembarrassed manner; I have even seen little boys of eight or ten hold forth to the court with complete self-possession and with an ease of diction and a grace of gesture that would have struck envy into the heart of an English member of Parliament. (Finnegan 1970:444).

Reflecting her observation of oratory skills in West African people, Finnegan concedes that she was struck by the oratory prowess of the Africans. She says there are both aesthetic and style in this art. Our study concurs with her contention that,
in the art of speech making, orators employ various gestures “gracefully” and appropriately.”

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the performance of the Kenyan Somali proverb. Under the topic, we have especially looked at the verbal elements like the vocalization of the proverb. We have also dealt with non-verbal elements in which the various gestures performed by using different sticks were explored. In doing so we exposed the way Kenyan Somali peace negotiators exploit the performance of the proverb to achieve their peace mission. The chapter also discussed the Somali oratory skills. In doing this, we have shown that, the proverb is used together with oratory skills and, on top, the oratory skill of the Somali does not only revolve around the proverb but also around the entire art of speaking.

In the next chapter I will summarise the findings of my study and will put my recommendation.
PICTURE 1
An elder with a cheotomy using a tronic gadget to talk is performing a proverb in peace meeting.
Picture Taken at Barissa by Barre

PICTURE 2
Peace Negotiation in Wajir.
Picture taken at Barissa by Bare

PICTURE 3
Leaders treating themselves with food and drinks offered by host of meeting.
Picture taken at Barissa by Issack.
PICTURE 4
Peace Negotiations under "tree".
Picture taken at Fino of Mandera.

PICTURE 5
The clan elders of Mohamed Ngeege in peace meeting.
Picture taken at Garissa by Abdikarim.

PICTURE 6
The land rover 110 used during the research carrying me members of the research community.
Picture taken at Darman by Issack Abdikarim.
PICTURE 7
Elders at peace meeting at Hulugho.
Picture taken at Hulugho—Ijara

PICTURE 8
Researcher addressing a peace meeting.
Picture taken at Scot by Abdikarim

PICTURE 9
Elders attentively following deliberations at peace meeting.
Picture taken at Garissa by Bare
PICTURE 10
Researcher participating in a peace meeting.
Picture taken at Garissa by Abdikadir

PICTURE 11
Ebba listening attentively to my interview.
Picture taken at Danyere by Abdikadir

PICTURE 12
Mr. Ibrahim performing a proverb during peace negotiations at Garissa.
Picture taken by Bare
Peace Negotiations in progress.

Picture taken at Kora by Bare

Researcher travelling with research assistants and others on foot to reach nomads.

Picture taken at Quq by Abdikadir

Reseacher travelling with security escort.

Picture taken at Darman by Issack
PICTURE 16
A traditional Somali Homestead in the research area.
Picture taken at Kora by Bare

PICTURE 17
Isnino being interviewed at Qorahey.
Picture taken at Qurahey by Bare

PICTURE 18
Some female respondents answering my interview
Picture taken at Darman by Issack
PICTURE 19

Elder Aden (standing) performing the proverb in peace meeting held at Kora

Picture taken at Kora by Abdikadir

PICTURE 20

Peace meeting where sticks (Tareeg) and (bakora) are used to make gestures

Picture taken at Darman by Ismail
6.0. CHAPTER

Summary and Conclusions

1. Summary

This study, which focused on the six main clans of the Kenya Somali, had the following three objectives:

(i) To analyze the content and functions of the Somali Proverb

(ii) To discuss the language of the Kenyan Somali Proverb and show how it helps communicate messages on conflict resolution in the community and

(iii) To discuss performance of the proverb in relation to conflict resolution in the community.

In view of the task at hand, I did fieldwork in North Eastern Province between 2003 and 2007. I interviewed 32 men and 12 women who gave me useful information on the proverb as a conflict resolution tool among the Kenyan Somalis. During the fieldwork I collected proverbs and recorded performance details on video, paper and still pictures. As a result, I collected over 146 proverbs which I have analyzed in this study. Thus, the results I present in this study come from a synthesis of data from a variety of sources: library sources, interviews with respected Somali men and women, observation of live performances from respected Somali proverb performers,
field notes, still pictures and video pictures and my own reading and interpretation of the Somali proverb. Thus, the methodology I have used and the theoretical framework that guides my study are in tandem-they are both people based. This creates harmony between the methodology I have applied and the theoretical orientation I adopted.

The results reveal that the proverb serves the following functions/roles in this community:

1. Resolving conflicts
2. Informing and educating
3. Warning against evils

The discussion on language reveals that the Somali Proverb employs the following stylistic devices in order to communicate effectively:

1. Poetic techniques such as imagery.
2. Sound effects such as Alliteration, Rhythm, Rhyme and Onomatopoeia.
3. Rhetorical devices such as hyperbole and allusion.
4. Repetition and parallelism.

The performance of the Somali proverb reveals that both verbal and non-verbal elements are effectively utilized.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the study has achieved its objectives. From the evidence provided in the three chapters, that is, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5, the validity of the research hypotheses given on page 3 is challenged or proved wrong. Thus, we can say that there is a strong relationship between the style or language of the proverb and its conflict resolution message. Contrary to the second hypotheses that performance only adds colour to the proverb in action, the study confirms that conflict resolution messages in the proverbs cannot be effectively communicated without a careful study of the performance details.

The findings of this study challenge the validity of the research hypothesis that there is no relationship between the function of the Kenyan Somali Proverb and conflict resolution in this community. In Chapter 3 the study thoroughly examines the relationship between the function of the proverb and conflict resolution in the community. The study has proved that conflict resolution is one of the major functions of the Kenyan Somali Proverb.
Last but not least, the study has shown that there is a lot of beauty in the style and delivery of the Kenyan Somali proverb. This study contributes in sharing as well as highlighting this beauty with the world at large.

2. Conclusion

In the process of compiling and developing this study, quite a number of important issues which require serious attention in the field of Kenyan Somali proverb were revealed to the researcher. Some of these issues, such as the need for a thorough linguistic study of the Somali language and the establishment or the formulation of a comprehensive literary theory for understanding African proverbs, have been suggested in the preceding section. A broader sample of analysis of the Somali proverb extended over a wider area than that covered by this research would no doubt help to refine the function of the proverb as suggested in the study, and would also reveal more aspects of the stylistic devices addressed in the fourth chapter of this study. I am also convinced that a broader and more systematically selected sample of field informants or interviewees would enhance the scholar's insight into the Kenyan Somali community's attitudes and responses to inter-clan conflicts as revealed in their proverbs.

I am recommending, as a task of future literary scholars, that a more thorough socio-literary methodology be applied for the analysis of both the functions and
performance of the proverb in order to deepen understanding of the two-way relationship between the social context and the proverb. It is particularly desirable to further investigate how the socio-cultural activities influence the un-known composer to actually compose the proverb and how also the aesthetic qualities of the proverb in turn impacts on socio-cultural attitudes and activities.

I also recommend a more proper recording of future studies of this discipline with more sophisticated equipment like cinematographic cameras and other electronic instruments. This would ensure more reliable documentation and would facilitate close analysis of the performing and audience-response aspects of the proverb.

Lastly, I suggest that future research should endeavour to situate the proverb within the whole corpus of Kenyan Somali folklore. This would deepen and broaden understanding of the proverb by establishing the inter-textual relationships between this and other genres of folklore, some of which have already been accounted for in his study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX 1

Collected Proverbs in Their Original Somali Language Followed by the English Translation or its Equivalent in Translation...

Wax la tiryeey, taag ma leh.
*Anything counted, will never last.*

Lama huraan, waa caws jiilaal.
The inevitable is the grass (dry) of the autumn.

Nin samraa, sad ma waayo.
*A patient person never misses his share.*

Gunnimo, geeri baa dhaanta.
*Death is better than slavery.*

Tolkaa, xaar buu ku cunsiiyaa.
*Your kinsmen can make you feed on faeces.*

Far keliyhi, Fool ma mayrto.
*One finger alone cannot wash a face.*

Ama cosob daaq, ama caymo waa.
*Graze your animal in “Cosob” or brace yourself for poverty.*

Nin tolkii, kama janno tago
*A man may not go to paradise because of his clan.*

Dhajiba dhulkuu jooguu, dhogortiisa leeyahay.
*A snake has same colour as the environment it lives in.*

Tolkaa iyo talaba, waa loo baahan yahay.
*A clan and a piece of advice are always needed.*
11 War jiraba, cakaaruu Immam.  
Any real issue will come to “Cakaare”.

12 Ili geedka dhabi, ma aragto.  
An eye cannot detect the thorn that pierces it.

13 Naag tol baa guursada, ninna way u galbataa.  
A woman is married by a clan but goes home of a husband.

14 Bilcaan waxay tiri, “Ninkii reeyaa, reerka leh”.  
Women say, “The winner (in the clan battle) is the owner (husband) of the family”.

15 Aqli waa quud.  
Intelligence is a provision of Allah.

16 Rag baa, reer dhaqa.  
Men are the ones (entrusted) to manage family affairs.

17 Rabbow ama roob keen, ama Riinoow keen.  
Oh! Allah either bring rain or Rinow(man).

18 Geesi, dharabtuu ku jiraa.  
Bravery begins right from the cradle.

19 Geesi, Illaah ma xilo.  
Allah always gives guidance to the brave one.

20 Naagtaada oo kaa warrantay, waa maradaada oo kaa warrantay.  
A wife divulging the secrets of her husband is like clothes revealing the secrets of the body.

1 Goob loo gabado, Gaari baa leh.  
A place where a man can call home is where “smart wife” stays.

2 Nin Gu’ kaa weyn, gu’ baas kaa weyn.  
A person older than you by less than a year, is older than you a whole year.
3 Nin carruur leh, baa cuud dhaqda.  
\textit{A person with children is capable of herding his animal (effectively).}

4 Bisinkaa, baraka leh.  
\textit{Start with the name of Allah to be blessed.}

5 Alle qabe, ma qoofo.  
\textit{Whoever relies on Allah has no worry.}

6 Dil iyo nolol, Illah baa leh.  
\textit{Both death and life are the preserve of Allah.}

7 Shimbir habeen duulay, wixii duuliyaa jira.  
\textit{If a bird that flies at night, there is cause.}

8 Dagaal wiil baa ku dhintaa, wiilse kuma dhasho.  
\textit{A conflict kills a son, but does not bear a son.}

9 Ku dhufasho ma ogii, ka dihid ma leh.  
\textit{No need to negotiate, just to hit.}

10 Nafta caano, nolashana biyo.  
\textit{The soul is milk, the life is water.}

1 Hal baruur ah baa, baruurya badan qurmisa.  
One piece of rotten fat spoils many pieces of fresh fat (if stored together).

2 Nab iyo Naar baa la simay.  
\textit{False allegation and hell fire are alike (They affect on the same way).}

3 Col naag ka kacay, iyo cadho qurbac ka kacday, midna ma Haraan.  
\textit{The Somali say “Conflict about a woman and a skin disease spread by a calf never end”}. 
34 Nin naag eryeyso, iyo Rati Rati eryahayo midna kaama gudaan.
*The Somali say “A man incited by a woman, and a he-camel running from another one will not stop till they run over you.*

35 Balaayo ka hortag bay leedahay, ee ka dabatag ma leh.

Catastrophe can be prevented, but cannot be reversed.

36 Nin wixii jooga aan ka talinin, wixii soo socdana kama taliyo.
*The person who cannot solve the present problem cannot solve the future one.*

37 Waraaba daalay diriitiisaa loo tagaa.

A hyena that was chased and chased and got exhausted, will fight fiercely.

38 Gacan wax qaadma baratay, haddii la gooyana gumudkaa dhaqaqaqaa.
*A hand that used to steal, even if amputated, the stump will try.*

39 Hadal daawa ayuu keena, ee dab ma kiciyo.
*Negotiation brings solution, (but) does not light up a fire.*

40 Nin weer gaaban, iyo waranba way degdegaan.
*A short-sighted man and a spear (thrown) both hurry up.*

41 Hadal, haan ma buuxsho.
*Speech does not fill “Haan” (a wooden vessel).*

42 Hadal nin bediyey ma dhamayn, nin gaabiyeyna ma hambaynin.
*A talkative did not ground the issue, neither did the brief one leave anything (for other speakers).*
43 Haddii Eygaygii hore aan ka dagaalammo, keyga dambe la ma dileen.

If I were to fight when my earlier dog was killed the present one would have been save.

44 Saddex kaa ma tagaan,
   (i) Maral Mawd og
   (ii) Gaajo guri og
   (iii) Gardarro garab og

Three will never leave you alone: -
   (i) Disease that knows death.
   (ii) Hunger that knows home (empty).
   (iii) Aggression that knows supporter

45 Oodda qaadid iyo jiidid, waa isla guri geyn.
   *To lift the “ood” or drag it is just the same so long you are taking it.*

46 Madax meel ka sarreyso, oo la salaaxo ma leh.
   *No part of human body is above the head.*

47 Maroodi Takarta saaran ma arko.
   *An elephant does not feel the fleas on him.*

48 Shimbir duulduul badan, af libaax bay shab tiraahdaa.
   *A bird that flies frequently Lands in a Lion’s mouth.*

49 Labo biyo isla maquuratay, meel ay iska daareen iyagaa og.
   *Two who together went deep in water know where they touched one another.*

50 Shah iyo Waranba meel ay maraan ma waayaan.
   *A cup of tea and a spear never miss a place in the body.*
51 Shah wakhti ma leh

Tea “taking” has no time

52 Muslim u taamoow, Allah ha kuu tabiineeyo.

*Assist Muslims, God will assist you.*

53 Ninkii Muslim dariiqa ka gooya, Illah baa dariiqiisa gooyaa.

*Whoever stands in the ways of Muslims, Allah blocks his way*

54 Boholo hadimo ha qodin, haddaad qoddana ha dheereyn, ku dhici doontaana ma ogide.

*Do not dig trenches for others, but if you must dig, do not make them too deep; you do not know whether it will be you who will fall in.*

55 Qaniinjaa, qaniinja kaa bujisa.

*Biting relieves biting.*

56 Dab ninkii ku gubtaa, dambaskiisa ka guda.

*Who got burnt in fire, runs away from its ash.*

57 Takoor, talo ma leh.

*An outcast has no advice to offer*

58 Qodhey iyo xerada.

*I take oath at the pain of losing my manhood and property.*

59 Nin habaar qaba, ma hodma.

*A cursed person will never succeed.*

60 Ballan darro, waa diin darro.

*A person who violates accords is like one with no religion.*
Qowl nin weyn ka dhacay, waa qolof geed ka dhacday.

An agreement between elders is irreversible, and like a tree cannot reposses the leaf it has shed.

Intaadan wax falin, ka fiirso.

Think before you leap.

Dheefey ku aaway? Dhib ayaan dhinacaa ka jiraa.

Where are you success? I am hiding behind problems.

Hilib waa nin waayey, iyo nin dabada saarsaartay.

Some people hardly get a small piece of meat, while others wore loads of it on their backs.

Caano daatay, dabadoodaa la qabtaa.

Do not waste milk, however little.

Hubsiinyo, hal baa la siistaa.

For confirmation of an issue, is worth a she-camel.

Bannaankiisa mare, maradiisa geed ma qabsado.

Whoever walks in the plains never gets his clothe torn by trees.

Waxaa day, waxa ka sokeeyana day.

Look at that, but also look at this (closer thing).

Indho way isku hurdaan, ee ma kala hurdaan.

Eyes sleep together, but cannot sleep separately.

Ilma kabaraay, Isma kediyaan.

The chickens of a guinea fowl never fail to recognize one another.

Dantaada, maaqaar ey baa loogu seexdaa.

For your interest (even) sleep on dog’s hide.
2 Nin yar intuu geed ka booduu, talo ka boodaa.
   *A young man leaps over important issues, the same way he leaps over trees.*

3 Bakayle intuu bur ku jiruu, bur kale raadsadaa.
   A hare looks for another hide-out before it vacates the one it has

4 Buda qabe iyo biyo qabe, waa ay isku baahanyihiin.
   A person with bounded maize only, and the one with water need one another.

5 Nin is faanshey, waa ri’ is tuuqtay.
   *A person who praises himself is like a goat that sucks itself.*

6 Nin abeesa koriyow, Adigaa u aayi.
   *Whoever brings up a viper, will reap the fruit.*

7 Geedkaad labaatan jir beerataad, lixdan jir harsataaa.
   You enjoy the shade of the tree you plant at twenty when you are sixty.

8 Libaax nin ganay iyo nin galaday, kala ogsoon.
   *A lion can differentiate between one who threw at him (spear) from the one who supported him (who did not throw at him).*

9 Qaaxa nin quud qarsadey, qalataa.
   *T.B. kills the lone eater.*

10 Hal hunguri weyn, geela hortii bay dhimataa.
   A greedy she-camel dies before others

11 Afjoogo, loo ma adeego.
   *A present person should not be advocated.*

12 Nin ani yiri, dad iska bixi.
   *A man who said “myself” has excluded himself from others.*
240

83 Beentaada hore, runtaada dambey u darantahay.

Your earlier lies affect your later truth.

84 Door bilcaan, daafaana rageed baa ka roon.

The dullest of men is better than the brightest of women

85 Nin ku caayey, tolkaana waa caayey.

One who has abused you has also abused your clan.

86 Waxaa la yiri "Saddex kaa ma tagaan."
Kuftin low
Kalaan Waalid
Kabasho subag

Three things will definitely catch up with you:
An injury of the knee.
A curse of the parents.
A sip of cooking oil (fat).

87 Soomaali been way sheegtaa, laankiise been ma maahmaahdo.

Somalis tell lies, but never lie in their proverbs.

88 Ninkii dhulka ka naxariista, samadaa looga naxariistaa.

One, who is kind on earth, finds kindness in heaven.

89 Nin aan shaqaysan, shah ma cabbo.

Who does not work, does not drink tea

90 Il meel dhow bay dhacdaa, dhegna meel dheer.

An eye (sight) falls a short distance, an ear (word of mouth) falls a long distance.

91 Nin dhididey wuu dheefsadaa, nimaan dhididinse dheef ma helo.

One who sweats does reap, one who does not sweat does not reap.
Halhays ma tihid, ee halbixis baad tahay.

*(I know) you are not the type to respond to others' queries only (fools), but rather you lead discussion (intelligent), but as of now, kindly accept to only respond to me.*

Nin kuu digey, kuma dilin.

*Someone who threatened you has not killed you.*

Rujaal laba qalbi ma leh.

No man has got two minds

Wax tagey, tiigsi ma leh.

*Anything long gone is not pursued.*

96. "Cadowgaaga cagta hoosteedaa lagu maqiiqaa"

(Your enemy is crushed under your feet)

Nin daad qaaday, xumbo cuskay.

A drowned person seeks help from the foam

98 "Weedh iyo Waramba way degdegaan"

(Both the word of mouth and the spear do hurry up)
99 Col hortii, digniin lahoow

Be prepared before enemy attacks

100 Seedigaa ha coleysan, walaashaa iskuma hubtide.

Don’t fight with your brother— in-law because you are not sure (rely on) of your sister.

01 Calool adeyg, waa ciirsi Illah.

To be strong and not to be waived, is to rely on God (determination).

02 Lexjela wiilkaadaa ku baraa, walaal jacaylna naagtaada.

Your son teaches you how to love your property while your wife teaches you how to love your brother.

03 Waxaan dhuuso moodahayey, ayaa xaar igu noqday.

What I thought was just an air became feaces.

04 Illah ha nagayeelo, xabbaddii Kal iyo Mooya dhexdooda ka baxday.

May Allah grant us like the power of the grain that escaped the crash of the “Kal” and “Moyo”.

05 Aabbahay gadaashii, ayaan calool galay.

I am a child born out of wedlock.

06 Wadajir bay Ilko, wax ku gooyaan.

Cooperation enabled teeth to cut.

07 Tolkaa kuma gabo, ee afkaaga yuu ku gabin.

Your kinsmen will never abandon you (if you ask for assistance), but your mouth can make you be abandoned (if you do not ask).

08 Waa lagu kufaa, lagu kala jabaab kibir.

Arrogance makes one fall and break into pieces.
109 Dhul iyo dhaqanba, dhabbahooda ka ma dhaqaagaan.
   
   Earth and culture never move from their place.

110 Habar fadhidaa, legdin la fududaa.
   
   An old woman thinks wrestling is an easy thing.

111 Dardaaran habeeneed, kallah waaberi buu u roonyahay.
   
   Planning at night is good for early morning work.

112 Nin naagtaada u jeeda, gabadhaada lagu ma karo.
   
   A man whose intention is to rape your wife, never cares for your daughter (even if you offer her to him).

113 Taran ka nax, tamooti ku faarax.
   
   There are among us people who are sad when we prosper, and happy when we are in misery.

114 Af ka soo baxdo, culays ma leh.
   
   An unintentional utterance has no effect.

115 Abtigaa kuma dilee, abti u eke yuu ku dilin.
   
   Your real uncle will never kill you, but take care of the fake uncle.

116 Aji, loo ma yeeshoodo.
   
   Never trust human beings.

117 Allah waxaan ahaynba, usha way ka dhacdaa.
   
   Only God is never errs.

118 Aqli rag, waa la ururshaa.
   
   Get many opinions from men.

119 Been sheeg, balse been run u eg sheeg.
   
   Tell lies but your lies should look like truth.
Boodboodkaa, Boolargi ma gaarahayo.

Bragging will take one no-where.

Barasho horteed, ha inicin.

Don't hate me before you learn who I am.

Cadowgaada, waa loo dhoolla caddeeyaa.

Trap your enemy with false smile

Dhani, waa seeto

You can only do what you can afford.

Hal oon baa daw geeya, laakiin ul ma geyso.

Thirst can lead a she-camel to the water point, but the cane cannot.

Illaahaadana qab, awrtaadana dabro.

Trust your God but still be careful.

Ilka iyo rumba, waa la caddeeyaa.

Both truth and teeth are made white (clear).

Kaadi badane, waa loo googol badiyaa.

Give the bed-wetter many beddings.

Laba dheri kariyow, mid baa kaa bura.

A man who cooks two pots at the same time, finds one spoiling the soup.

Lax iyo Laxow, meel ma wada galaan.

Ewe and pain never share one place.

La ma canaante, ayaa caanihii daadshay.

The untouchable has spilt the milk.

Naag ama u samir, ama ka samir.

Have patience with a woman or forget her.
132 Nin gura laba Faras, ma wada fuulo.
   *One man cannot ride two horses.*

133 Nin dhintay, kabihiiisaak ka roon.
   *What is the use of a dead man, his shoes are better.*

134 Nin fadhigaada arka, loo ma sarajoogsada.
   *Do not stand for a man who already sees where you are sitting.*

135 Nin gawracan, geed ka ma gudo.
   *A slaughtered man will never take care of washing against the trees.*

136 Qof Kasta qumaniihiisaak, qoorta ogu jira.
   *Everybody feels he is the right one.*

137 Ri”kasta shalalkay is dhigtaa, lagu qalaa.
   *A goat is slaughtered where it lays itself.*

138 Rag run, ka ma nixiso.
   *Men never shy away from the truth.*

139 Sixun u warran, sixirna ka daran.
   *Mis-information is worse than sorcery.*

140 Sir ma qabe, Allah u sahan ah.
   *God assists the honest ones.*

141 Shalayto, waa shay xaaraan ah.
   *Regret is bad.*

142 Sagaara labi laacday, luqun dheerer uma geynin, ee laab dheerer baa u geysay.
   *The deer that tried to graze at the top of the tall tree did not do so because it has a long neck but simply because it was too ambitious.*

143 Tala Walaal diidow, tagoogtuu ka jabaa.
   *The loser is the one who does not follow the advice of his brothers.*
44 Waa beryey, sacabbo lagu ma qariyo.
   *No one can hide the dawn with his palms.*

45 Ama afeef hore lahoow, ama adkaysi dambe.
   *You either take precautions or persevere (when something happens to you).*

46 Nab iyo naar baa la simey
   *False allegation and hell fire are just the same.*
Appendix 2

Interview Guide for Female Opinion Leaders

1. (a) Do proverbs exist in the Kenyan Somali community?

(b) If your answer to (a) is yes, what do Somali call them?

2. (a) Are you aware that there are clan peace negotiations?

(b) If your answer to (a) is yes, when and why are such meetings held.

(c) Who attends these meetings?

(d) Why is it that it is only these people who attend?

3. (a) Have you ever attended the clan peace meetings?

(b) If yes, when was this?

(c) Where did the meeting take place?

(d) Who invited you to attend the meetings?

4. What role(s) do proverbs serve in peace negotiations?

5. (a) Describe how the proverbs are performed?

(b) Does the performance of the proverb add in any meaningful way to the communication of message(s) on conflict resolution?

(c) Describe how this is done.
6. (a) Is it correct to say that the proverb has elements of style?

(b) If the answer to the above question is yes, please name some of these styles.

7. Besides communicating messages on peace, what other functions do proverbs serve in this community?
Appendix 3:

Interview Guide for Male Opinion Leaders

1. (a) Who are the Somalis?
   (b) From the Somali history, where did they come from and why did they settle where they are found now?

2. (a) Proverbs exist in this society. What is the Somali name for them?
   (b) Who composes the Somali proverbs?
   (c) How are these proverbs learnt?
   (d) Who uses proverbs in this community?
   (e) When are they used?

3. (a) Are proverbs ever used in conflict resolutions?
   (b) Who attends such peace meetings in this community?
   (c) How are such meetings organized?
   (d) Can you give some of the proverbs that are used in these peace meetings?
   (e) Kindly describe the details of performance that accompanies the proverbs in a live peace meeting session.

4. (a) Would you say that proverbs are aesthetically rich?
   (b) If your answer to (a) is yes, what makes them aesthetically rich?
5. Apart from communicating messages of peace, what other functions do proverbs serve in this community?
## APPENDIX 4: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

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<th>Age</th>
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