



Analysing the Evolution and Impact of Somali Orthography on Language Standardization and Literacy Rates

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Abstract: This research examines the development, dissemination, and impact of Somali orthography on language standardization and literacy rates. This study investigates how the orthographical dissemination had laid the core foundation for the mass literacy campaign that had categorically altered the illiteracy rate that had precluded any form of development and progress in the nascent and fragile country. The study explored the historical context of Somali orthography, from its inception to its current form, assessing its effectiveness in promoting literacy and fostering linguistic unity. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis of educational materials, linguistic studies, and literacy data, data analysis and interpretation of the study were based on questionnaires and interviews, some of the data was acquired from the fieldwork, others during the interview process and others were contributed from Somali individuals who participated in the campaign and are now senior citizens living in the country. The research will evaluate

the relationship between orthographic reforms and literacy rates in Somalia. Additionally, it will investigate the challenges and successes encountered in disseminating Somali orthography, considering factors such as colonial legacies, linguistic diversity, and technological advancements. Ultimately, the research seeks to provide insights into the role of orthography in language development and literacy promotion within the Somali context.

Keywords: Somali Orthography, Language Standardization, Literacy Rates, Orthographic Reforms, Language Policy, Educational Development, Sociolinguistics, Somalia.

Introduction

The background of the study contextualizes the significance of Somali orthography and its impact on language standardization and literacy rates in Somalia. It highlights the historical context of low literacy rates and the need for orthographic reforms to address this issue. Additionally, it underscores the importance of a mass literacy campaign in overcoming barriers to development and progress in Somalia. The background also emphasizes the role of orthographic dissemination in laying the groundwork for improving literacy rates and fostering development in a nascent and fragile country like Somalia.

There is a growing concern regarding Somali orthography within the context of global languages and the challenges to remain competitive in regional languages. Orthography is a crucial element for national identity. As was the case with many newly independent African nations, Somalia was beset by a language problem whose complexity had begun well before independence and the merging of British Somaliland and Italian Somali land in 1960 with three languages (English, Arabic, and Italian) used as media of communication in government offices and in schools, various Somali administrations struggled to contain the impasse but found no tangible solution.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the pivotal role of Somali orthography in shaping language standardization and literacy rates, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of Somalia. By examining the development, dissemination, and impact of orthography, the research sheds light on how orthographic reforms have laid the foundation for a mass literacy campaign, effectively reducing historically high illiteracy rates. This study's findings have implications for educational policy, language planning, and development initiatives not only in Somalia but also in other regions facing similar challenges.

The codification and dissemination of Somali orthography have involved significant political competition and religious confrontation, which sowed deep-rooted animosity beginning in the nineteenth century. Early explorers and travelers notably characterized Somalis by their rich oral poetry tradition. The campaign to write and spread the Somali language became a pivotal, sensitive, and controversial issue in the struggle for emancipation from colonial rule. Another crucial factor was the Islamization of the Somali peninsula; the Arabic language has been used for writing by Somalis since the third Islamic century, corresponding to the ninth century CE. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Somali Youth League (SYL) faction rapidly advanced a plan to promote the adoption of the Latin alphabet for writing Somali. Orthography, defined as a standardized form of a writing system, is universally accepted as a consistent style. Somali is an Afro-Asiatic language belonging to the Cushitic branch, spoken widely as a mother tongue by Somalis in Greater Somalia and the Diaspora worldwide (Osman, 2007).

The Somali language did not have a standardized written orthography until 1972, and the primary languages of organization and education were English, Italian, and Arabic. The illiteracy rate at the time was approximately 90%, with foreign languages dominating the country, effectively depriving the majority of the population of fundamental rights, cultural and linguistic identities, and access to education, healthcare, employment, and other social services (Hared, 1992; Abdullahi, 1978). In 1969, the autocratic government sponsored and funded a comprehensive initiative to standardize Somali orthography and launched a mass literacy campaign to disseminate basic reading and writing skills across the country. According to Jama (1974), ignorance is the enemy of love.

Somali script is the official and national orthography in Somalia, the national language in Djibouti, and a working language in the Somali regions of Ethiopia and Kenya. It is also adopted by some neighboring ethnic minority groups and individuals. The Somali language was officially written using the Latin alphabet starting in 1972. Somali linguistic varieties are broadly classified into three main groups: Northern, Southern, and Maay. However, modern linguistic studies by Lamberti (1986) have identified five dialect groups within Somali — Maxaa Tiri, Maay, Banaadir, Ashraaf — alongside four Digil dialects — Jiidde, Garre, Tuni, and Dabarre. The south-central Somali dialect forms the basis for standard Somali and is spoken by more than 60% of the Somali population. The Southern dialect, also known as Coastal Somali, is spoken along the central Indian Ocean seaboard, including Mogadishu (Ali, 1985).

The total number of Somali speakers worldwide is estimated to be close to 16 million (Ethnologue), though this figure may be higher due to the complexity of collecting reliable data about the numerous Somali expatriate communities worldwide. Within Somalia, Somali is spoken by the majority of the population and is used extensively in education, administration, and the media. It is taught both as a subject and as a medium of instruction in primary schools and as a subject in secondary schools. Many media outlets globally also broadcast programs in the Somali language (Ali, 2011).

Many attempts were made to address the problem of illiteracy in Somalia both before and after the civil war. In 1957, a UNESCO-funded technical assistance program enabled a group of teachers to organize a literacy campaign in Somali rural areas. The teachers recruited only 20 students and taught them in Italian, one day a week, for three months. This effort was effective only during the dry season; when rains came, students returned to their pastoral lifestyles and discontinued attendance. The nomadic lifestyle of Somalis, combined with the lack of a written Somali language, posed significant obstacles for literacy training. Adult Somalis faced the daunting challenge of learning to read and write in a foreign language, and few embraced the opportunity. However, adult education experienced a revival after adoption of the Latin script for the Somali language in 1972. In March 1973, the President declared a “cultural revolution” aiming to bring literacy to all Somalis by 1975 (Abdi Ali, 1998).

During the 1974–1975 school year, secondary schools in Somalia were closed, and students and volunteers were sent to rural areas to teach adults literacy skills. By the end of this campaign, the government claimed that nearly 2 million Somalis had learned to read and write, a significant achievement for a country of around 6 million people at the time (Haybe, n.d.; Hared, 1992). The literacy campaign became a permanent part of Somali life following this rural development effort, with many adult education evening classes established to continue its vision. The identification and geography of Somalia are important contextual factors. The country's name traces back to the legendary ancestor of the Somali people, Samaal or Samale. In 1960, two former colonial territories—British Somaliland and Italian Somalia—united to form the Somali Republic (Adam, 1980; Lewis, 1988).

The Somali Republic is located in the Horn of Africa, bordered by Ethiopia to the west, the Red Sea to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Kenya to the south. Somalia has a population of roughly 13 million, with an economy largely reliant on agriculture, livestock, and fishing (World Bank, 2010). During the colonial period, Somalia was divided into five territories, including French Somaliland, British Somaliland, and Italian Somaliland, with colonization lasting nearly a century. Colonial languages were used as the medium of instruction and administration, which deprived Somalis of their own language in these domains. The former British and Italian Somaliland territories gained independence and merged as the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960, while French Somaliland remained a French colony until June 27, 1977, when it became the Republic of Djibouti with a population of approximately two million at that time (Lewis, 1988; Abdullahi, 2001). Consequently, Somalia inherited two foreign languages for administrative and educational affairs.

Standardization process

Somali has been a written language since at least 1880, utilizing Arabic, Latin, and several unique Somali scripts (Tosco, 2015). Beginning in 1941, Somali was also used in broadcasting from Mogadishu and Hargeisa, especially notable during the mass literacy campaign of 1973–75 (Puglielli & Mansuur, 2012; Haybe, n.d.).

After the unification of the Italian protectorate in the east and south with British Somaliland into the independent Somali Republic in 1960, language policy and planning played a significant role for three decades. Initially, Italian, English, and Arabic were recognized as official languages, and a Language Commission was appointed to decide on a Somali script (Adam, 1968; Mansur, 1998). A Latin-based script was proposed by the commission, but the government hesitated, possibly due to concerns about reactions from religious leaders (Qutbi, 1961, as cited in Mansur, 1998). Between 1965 and 1967, Commissioner Shire Jama Ahmed published a book and several journal issues presenting what later became the official Somali script (Andrzejewski, 1978). In 1969, a Russian-Somali-Russian dictionary was published in Moscow using the same orthography (Orwin, 1994).

Later that year, a military coup transformed the Somali Republic into the Somali Democratic Republic. The new government pledged to make Somali the official language as soon as possible. A new Language Commission was appointed to produce schoolbooks, a dictionary, and a reference grammar (Warsame, 2001; Hared, 1992). In 1971, the grammar was published, and in January 1973, Somali was introduced as the sole language of administration. Later that year, it became the language of instruction for the youngest pupils. Numerous new schoolbooks were published, and a broad literacy campaign was launched among adults (Hared, 1992). In 1976, the first monolingual Somali dictionary was published, and by the late 1970s, all primary and secondary education was conducted in Somali. Schoolbooks for all subjects and terminological wordlists were produced in Somali (Andrzejewski, 1980). This progress continued until the civil war erupted at the end of the 1980s. Until then, the use of written Somali in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti remained marginal, and public use of spoken Somali was discouraged in some areas (Abdullahi, 2001; Banda, 2009).

In the 1970s and 1980s, language policy in the Somali Democratic Republic was highly centralized and closely controlled by the state, which led to considerable success in language planning and dissemination (Adam, 1980; Warsame, 2001). Today, however, language policy is no longer a priority; instead, three political centers—Mogadishu (Somalia), Hargeisa (Somaliland), and Jigjiga (the Somali Region of

Ethiopia)—shape language use indirectly through their approaches to Somali in education, administration, and politics (Banda, 2009; Abdulaziz, 2003).

Documentation of the Standard

The codification of the Somali language remains weak. The standard forms are primarily documented in schoolbooks produced by the Language Commission and Ministry of Education (Andrzejewski, 1964; Andrzejewski, 1978), but the only explicit codification is found in a concise reference grammar published by the official language commission tasked with establishing the national orthography in the early 1970s (Galaal, 1952; Tosco, 2015). While these sources provide a foundation for Somali as a written language, comprehensive and universally adopted codification is limited.

Several monolingual dictionaries have been published in Mogadishu (e.g., Keenadiid, 1976), Djibouti (e.g., Carab, 2004), Nairobi (Warsame, 2001), and Rome (Mansur & Puglielli, 1999; Puglielli & Mansuur, 2012), but these works generally possess a weaker status due to lack of official sanction from governmental authorities in any Somali-speaking state (Andrzejewski, 1978; Mansur & Puglielli, 1999; Tosco, 2015). The same is true for various respected reference grammars—such as those written by Saeed (1993, 1999) and Mansur & Puglielli (1999)—which, while authoritative, are not universally adopted as standards.

Present situation in the Somali-speaking areas

SOMALIA, without Somaliland, has about 10 million inhabitants (United Nations, 2017 as cited in Somaliland Government, 2010), with 8–10 million Somali speakers depending on the recognition of the Maay variety (Ethnologue as cited in Heine, 1978). Somalia is a federal republic and considers Somaliland to be part of its territory. According to the constitution, the official language is Somali (including both Common Somali and Maay), and Arabic serves as the second language (Lewis, 1988). Public schools primarily use Somali across all 12 grades, with standardized textbooks produced in Mogadishu. However, universities and private schools often use Arabic or English as the primary languages of instruction (Abdulaziz, 2003). There are very few textbooks in Somalia for higher education. The media almost exclusively uses Somali, and most newspapers and books aimed at the general public are published in Somali (Appleyard & Owen, 2008; Lewis, 1988). In politics, most written documents are in English, but Somali dominates spoken communication.

SOMALILAND has about 4 million inhabitants (Somaliland Government & National Bureau of Statistics, 2010), nearly all of whom speak Somali (Appleyard & Owen, 2008). Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, although formal international recognition is still lacking (Lewis, 1988). According to the constitution, the official language is Somali, with Arabic as the second language; other languages can be used as needed (Lewis, 1988). Public schools use Somali in all grades, with standardized textbooks produced in Hargeisa. Universities and private schools often employ English or Arabic as instructional languages (Abdulaziz, 2003). The availability of textbooks for higher education remains limited. The media is dominated by Somali, and most newspapers and books for the public are published in Somali (Appleyard & Owen, 2008). In politics, English is commonly used in written communication for some domains, but Somali is prevalent in oral interactions.

ETHIOPIA has about 105 million inhabitants, where some 6.5 million are Somali speakers (CSA 2007, CIA 2017). As of 1996, it is a federal republic divided into 9 ethnically-based regions. Amharic is the official language of the country, but regional languages may be used for internal affairs within the nine separate regions. In the Somali region, Somali is the language of instruction for grades 1–8, and Amharic is taught as a foreign language. In grades 9–12, both Somali and English are used, whilst higher education is basically in English throughout the whole country (Bijiga report in curriculum planning and management in 2015: 142ff.) Standard schoolbooks in Somali are produced in Jigjiga, but there are hardly any Somali books for higher education. However, since 2014 there has been a department of Somali Language and Literature at Jigjiga University, with a full BA program in Somali (120 full-time and 700 part-time students), and since 2015 there has been a Somali section at the Department of Social Sciences at Dire Dawa University (68 full time and 214 part-time students). These two BA programs are unique within the Horn of Africa. Only one Ethiopian TV channel and a few radio stations broadcast in Somali.

No newspapers and very few books are published in Somali. In politics, Amharic is used at the national level, whereas Somali may be used at the regional level.

Djibouti has over 0.8 million inhabitants, of whom about 0.5 million are Somali speakers. It became independent from France in 1977. Most of the remaining part of the population speaks the related Cushitic language, Afar. The country's two official languages are French and Arabic, but French dominates. In the constitution, the two indigenous languages, Somali and Afar, are called —national languages. They are practically only used in oral communication in non-official situations. The educational system uses French, but there are also some Arabic schools and university courses taught in Arabic. Somali and Afar are not used in education and are not even studied as a subject, hence there are no textbooks in Somali (linguistic scholar and the author of numerous articles about Somali languages, Mahamoud 2011, 2016). There is, however, an Institute for the National Languages at the Research and Study Centre of Djibouti, where five researchers work on the Somali language and literature. The languages in media are mainly French and Arabic. There are also some Somali transmissions on TV and radio. A few publications appear in Somali. In politics, French is the dominant language, but Somali is sometimes used in oral communication.

KENYA has 46 million inhabitants, of whom some 2.8 million are Somali speakers According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2017; Oparanya, 2010). English and Swahili are the official languages. English dominates in education, but Swahili is also used in the lower grades. Also, Somali schools or classes are sometimes organised for the lower grades, but on a purely private initiative. Schoolbooks from Somalia may then be used in these classes, as they are often printed in Kenya. English and Swahili dominate the media, but there are also a few Somali transmissions on TV and a small number of Somali radio stations. There are, however, very few printed publications in Somali. The languages used in politics are English and Swahili.

The emergence of regional standards

In the 1970s and 1980s, one dominating standard was consciously developed in the Somali Democratic Republic (including today's Somaliland). The Banadir variety of Mogadishu was considered dialectal from the perspective of the majority, and therefore the variety spoken by the majority (often referred to as Northern Somali) was taken as the base. The standard was formed as a certain compromise (**Hared, 1992, p. 18ff.**). It was largely shaped by the Somali Language Commission through the media and the educational system (**Andrzejewski, 1980; Caney, 1984**). The country was a socialist republic with state-controlled publishing houses, radio, and television, which made language planning easier and more efficient than it would have been under more democratic conditions (**Hared, 1992, p. 40f.**). This process was, however, interrupted at the end of the 1980s when the civil war began. Somaliland declared its independence in 1991 and went its own way. In the 21st century, a certain linguistic divergence between Somaliland and Somalia can be noticed. It becomes tangible in their new series of schoolbooks published in two almost identical parallel editions.

The competing linguistic centres are primarily Mogadishu and Hargeisa, but also Djibouti and Jigjiga belong to a larger northern region together with Hargeisa, and a new step towards even greater diversity was taken around 2010 when an independent series of Somali schoolbooks was produced in Jigjiga. Their contents differ completely from the books already published in Hargeisa and Mogadishu.

It is difficult to say which of the two varieties of Somali, based in Mogadishu and Hargeisa, is the more dominant one. The northern variety has, however, been somewhat more productive in publishing, possibly due to the peace in Somaliland. On the other hand, the southern variety is supported by the largest Somali city and its traditional capital. The variety in Ethiopia is easier to classify as non-dominant. Conscious speakers seem to be looking for certain linguistic guidance from the side of Somalia and Somaliland, as noted by the writer, scholar, linguist, historian, and polymath **Musa Haji Ismaaciil Galal (1952)**.

Previous studies of Somali regional standards

In the existing literature, the common standard formed during the 1970s and 1980s is most often contrasted with non-standard usage. Very little work has been done on the regional variations within the standard language itself, based on investigating larger amounts of texts from different regions. However, the Somali dialects more broadly **have been thoroughly investigated by scholars such as Lamberti (1986, 1988), Mire (2010), and Ismail (2011)**. Changes over time in the standard of the 70s and 80s were investigated by **Hared (1992)**, and more general issues of variation in the modern standard are discussed in, e.g., **Banti (2011, 2012), Banti and Ismail (2015), Fayruus (2015), and Mansur (2015)**.

Somali Corpora

Today, three Somali corpora are available online. The first, **SOMALI Korp**, was launched in October 2015 at the Swedish Language Bank, University of Gothenburg (**Korp, 2015**). This corpus, which currently stands at 5 million tokens, is accessible through the same interface and search engine as the Swedish National Corpus, allowing an unlimited number of hits and providing statistics in Excel format. However, the data is not lemmatised or tagged. **The data is, however, divided into 37 individually selectable sub-corpora, containing different types of texts originating from different regions within the Somali-speaking area—a relevant feature given the ongoing discussion about whether Somali should become an official language in Sweden (Should Somali Become an Official Language in Sweden?, 2018)**.

The second corpus, SOMALI Corpus, at Redsea Foundation in Hargeisa, was launched in June 2016. This corpus, containing 3 million tokens, is accessible through a corpus-specific search engine and interface. The data is lemmatised and tagged for parts of speech.

The third corpus, SoMALI WAC 2016 Corpus, was launched in February 2017. It was developed by the Norhed project in collaboration between the universities of Addis Ababa, Brno, and Oslo. This corpus, containing 80 million tokens, consists of texts which have been automatically collected from the internet. (Mansur, 1998) major transformation of Somali national orthography and its stages,) (Somali from oral to written language).

Review of Literature

Language standardization and literacy progress in Somalia have been significantly influenced by the creation of Somali orthography. Arabic, Osmanya, Borama, and Kaddare are some of the competing scripts that represent cultural and political influences in the early attempts to create a written form of Somali that started in the 19th century. National cohesion and educational advancement were hampered by the absence of a common writing system, claim Laitin (1977) and Andrzejewski (1983). An important turning point was the formal adoption of the Latin-based spelling in 1972 under President Siad Barre, which aided literacy drives across the country and promoted linguistic unification.

Although issues with rural literacy and dialectal variety still exist, further research (e.g., Warsame, 2001; Abdullahi, 2017) highlights how the Latin script enhanced accessibility to schooling and administrative communication. In addition to bringing new orthographic variations online, more recent research emphasizes the importance that digital media and diaspora groups play in maintaining the standardized orthography. All things considered, the development of Somali orthography shows how language planning, national identity, and literacy advancement interact dynamically.

Brief historical and linguistic background of Somali orthography

Setting unanimous and inclusive Somali orthography was a controversial, thorny and contentious issue due to ulterior motives and the country did not have any written form of language. Somali has been written with several different scripts, including an Arabic-based abjad known as Wadaad's writing. Latin-based alphabet and the Borama, Osmanya and Kaddare alphabets. The current official script for Somali is the Latin alphabet and was invented by Shire Jama Ahmed (introduction to Somali linguistics written

by) Orwin (1994) Somali language belongs to the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The Somali language was officially written in 1972 and the revolutionary government of Mohamed Siad Barre invested a lot of time, energy and resources to formalize the Somali language, harmonize technical terminologies and jargon and make education available and accessible to the Somali public in their Somali language.

As a result of this mammoth task and effort, the Somali language became one of the most developed African languages in the 1970s and 1980s, with all students studying Somali in their academic institutions including Universities but the apocalyptic catastrophe has made everything upside down as we refer to the collapse of the central government in 1991, Somali language lost its prestige, momentum and value. Somali has been written with some different scripts, including an Arabic-based abjad known as Wadaad's writing, a Latin-based alphabet and the Borama, Osmanya and Kaddare alphabets. The current official script for Somali is the Latin alphabet (As illustrated by the author, Chizigula of Somali Dictionary (2020).

Methodology

The scope of the study encompasses an in-depth analysis of the historical context of Somali orthography, its dissemination, and the subsequent impact on literacy rates. It examines various factors influencing orthographic reforms and evaluates their effectiveness in improving literacy levels. Additionally, the study considers the socio-economic and political contexts that have shaped the implementation of orthographic reforms in Somalia. Through empirical research and analysis, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the relationship between orthographic reforms and literacy rates, contributing to a better understanding of language policy and educational development in fragile states.

The study explored the historical context of Somali orthography, from its inception to its current form, assessing its effectiveness in promoting literacy and fostering linguistic unity. Through qualitative analysis of educational materials, linguistic studies, and literacy data, data analysis and interpretation of the study were based on questionnaires and interviews, some of the data was acquired from the fieldwork, others during the interview process and others were contributed from Somali individuals who participated in the campaign and are now senior citizens living in the country. The study used 200 participants.

The respondents were selected conveniently from 17 administrative districts in the Benadir region of Somalia the target sample includes most male and female, youth and senior citizens who had prior knowledge, experience and usage of Somali orthography, the reason for adopting cross-sectional design sampling is due to unavailability of statistical data about target population, the second reason is that through this technique it is possible to collect the data more efficiently, a total of 200 valid responses were collected from all districts that included in the study. Two-thirds of them were males and more than fifty percent hold university and advanced degrees. The design will be descriptive cross-sectional because this design will be used to provide an accurate account of the characteristics of particular individuals, events, or groups in real-life situations to discover facts and figures, through information that should be gained from the questionnaire, the correlation design will be used to establish and substantiate the relationship between the independent and dependent variable through quantifiable results.

Therefore, the population that was targeted in this study included University students, academics and language lecturers in Mogadishu, Benadir region, Somalia The study subjects were people living in the capital city of Somalia, Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia and located in nadir region, this research was undertaken in Benadir region. Descriptive statistical techniques (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) were employed to analyze field data from interviews and questionnaires to assist the interpretation and analysis of data using a statistical package for social sciences (IBM SPSS Version 21) inferential statistics in the form of Pearson correlation coefficient was used to check the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS

Demographic profile of respondents

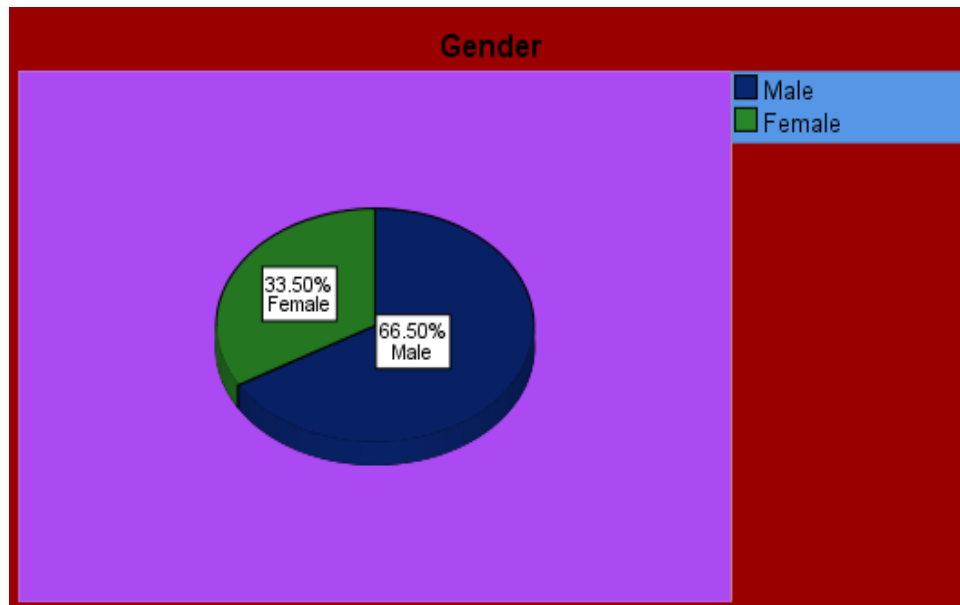
1. Demographic Characteristics

The gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Female	67	33.5
	Male	133	66.5
	Total	200	100.0

Table 1 Gender of the respondents

According to the Gender of respondents in the study indicates that 133 (66.5%) of them were Male and only 67 (33.5%) of them were Female. This implies that the majority of respondents were male.



2. Marital status

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Divorce	19	9.5
	Married	55	27.5
	Single	126	63.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 2 Marital statuses

According to the marital status of respondents, the study indicates that 126 (63.0%) of them were single, 55 (27.5%) of them were married and only 19 (9.5%) of them were divorced. This implies that the majority of the respondents were single.

3. Age of respondents

	Frequency	Per cent

Valid	30-40	55	27.5
	above40	17	8.5
	below30	128	64.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 3 Age of the respondents

According to the Age of respondents, the study showed that 128(64.0%) of the respondents were age below 30 years old, 55(27.5%) of them were aged between 30 – 40 years old, 17(8.5%) of them were age above 40 years old. This implies that most of the respondents were aged below 30 years old.

4. Employment status of respondents

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Employed	80	40.0
	self-employed	44	22.0
	Unemployed	76	38.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 4 Employed status of the respondents

According to the Employment status of respondents, the study indicates that 80(40.0%) of them were employed 76(38.0%) of them were unemployed and only 44(22.0%) of them were self-employed. This implies that the majority of respondents were employed.

5. Qualification of the respondents

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Bachelor	103	51.5
	Diploma	34	17.0
	Master	36	18.0
	PG Diploma	18	9.0
	PhD	9	4.5
	Total	200	100.0

Regarding the Education level of respondents, the study presented that 103(51.5%) and 36(18.0%) of them were bachelor's and master's respectively, 34(17.0%) and 18(9.0%) of them were at Diploma and PG diploma levels respectively and only 9(4.5%) of the respondents were at PHD level. This implies that most of the respondents had master's and Bachelor's degrees.

6. Role of orthography

Table 6: Role of Orthography

DescriptiveStatistics			
	Mean	Interpretation On	Rank
ORTH1	2.87	Noopinion	1
ORTH2	3.05	Noopinion	2
ORTH3	3.15	Noopinion	3
ORTH5	3.18	Noopinion	4
ORTH10	3.26	Noopinion	5
ORTH8	3.30	Noopinion	6
ORTH9	3.33	Noopinion	7
ORTH7	3.38	Agree	8.5
ORTH6	3.38	Agree	8.5
ORTH4	3.43	Agree	10
Total	3.28	Noopinion	

Table 6 communicates that among the respondents who chose strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree, the average choice is no opinion. Most of the respondents expressed mixed reactions about this issue under the study due to a lack of profound knowledge and constraints and as we stated in our theory of orthographic dissemination process and according to the objectives of the research the respondents randomly targeted in the survey have a positive idea about the role of orthography in the rural-urban development campaign.

7. Dissemination of Orthography

Table 7: Dissemination of Orthography

DescriptiveStatistics			
	Mean	Interpretation On	Rank
DIS1	3.03	Noopinion	1
DIS3	3.18	Noopinion	2
DIS2	3.24	Noopinion	3
DIS7	3.35	Agree	4
DIS5	3.37	Agree	5
DIS9	3.40	Agree	6
DIS10	3.44	Agree	7.5
DIS4	3.44	Agree	7.5
DIS8	3.45	Disagree	9
DIS6	3.54	Agree	10

Total	3.344	Noopinion	
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Table 7 indicates that among the respondents who chose strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree, the average choice is no opinion. The researcher argued that the no opinion of the respondents did not reflect the majority of the respondents but it was hesitation from the respondents and then the researcher explored the most viable option which was to engage directly with the respondents and eventually managed to convince and persuade them to reverse their prior decision of abstention and have a decision to agree or disagree the issue under the intense scrutiny and offer long and extensive deliberation. The respondents determined to express their opinion once again the researcher emphasized that no option does not mean that the respondents did not utter anything or do not have any idea at all about the current issue of the study.

8. Correlation

Table 8: The correlation of Orthography on Dissemination

Correlations		ORTH	DIS
ORTH	Pearson Correlation	1	.645**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	200	200
DIS	Pearson Correlation	.645**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

There are positive significant correlation between orthography on dissemination at 64.5% orthographic dissemination had a wider and longstanding impact on the entire mass literacy campaign and concrete results have been achieved.

Discussion

The descriptive statistics presented in the study indicate that there were mixed reactions among the respondents regarding the issue of Somali orthography and its role in the rural-urban development campaign. Despite this mixed response, there was a generally positive perception of the importance of orthography in the development campaign. The mean score of 3.28, interpreted as "no opinion," suggests that while respondents did not strongly lean towards either a positive or negative viewpoint, there was some level of uncertainty or indecision among them. This lack of a definitive opinion may reflect the complexity of the issue and the varied perspectives held by individuals within the sample. The mixed reactions observed in the data could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the respondents may have differing levels of awareness and understanding regarding the role of orthography in language standardization and literacy rates. Additionally, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors may influence individuals' perceptions of orthographic reforms and their impact on development. The positive perception of orthography's role in the rural-urban development campaign suggests that many respondents recognize its potential to contribute to positive change and progress in Somalia. However, the lack of strong consensus or definitive opinions highlights the need for further research and dialogue on this topic.

Given the main purpose of the study to investigate the 1974-75 joint programs to write and disseminate Somali orthography across the country, it's essential to consider the theoretical framework of the orthographic dissemination process as proposed by D. Haynes (1972) and D. A. Wilkins (1972)

According to Haynes and Wilkins, orthographic dissemination involves not only the development and standardization of written language systems but also the systematic distribution and implementation of

these systems within a given community or population. This process is crucial for promoting literacy and language standardization, particularly in contexts where written language norms may be lacking or underdeveloped. Applying this theoretical framework to the study, the mixed reactions expressed by respondents regarding Somali orthography's dissemination may reflect challenges or complexities inherent in the dissemination process. While respondents may have a positive perception of orthography's role in rural-urban development campaigns, their overall uncertainty or lack of a definitive opinion suggests potential issues with the dissemination strategy employed during the 1974-75 joint programs.

Possible factors contributing to mixed reactions could include variations in the effectiveness of dissemination efforts across different regions or communities, discrepancies in the accessibility of orthographic materials and resources, and challenges related to linguistic diversity and cultural contexts within Somalia. Furthermore, the mean score of 3.28 interpreted as "no opinion" may indicate a need for further investigation into the specific experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the orthographic dissemination process. By exploring the factors influencing respondents' attitudes and perceptions, researchers can gain valuable insights into the successes and limitations of past dissemination initiatives and inform future efforts to promote Somali orthography and literacy development. In summary, the theoretical framework of orthographic dissemination process provides a valuable lens for interpreting the mixed reactions of respondents in the study. By considering the principles outlined by Haymes and Wilkins, researchers can deepen their understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with orthographic dissemination efforts and contribute to the advancement of literacy and language standardization in Somalia and similar contexts.

Overall, the descriptive statistics provide valuable insights into the attitudes and perceptions of respondents regarding Somali orthography and its impact on development initiatives. Further analysis and interpretation of the data could offer deeper insights into the factors influencing these attitudes and their implications for policy and practice.

The descriptive statistic of a mean of 3.344, interpreted as "No Opinion," suggests that respondents had varying levels of uncertainty or indecision regarding the dissemination of Somali orthography. This lack of a clear consensus among respondents indicates a complex and nuanced understanding of the issue. There could be several reasons behind this result. Firstly, respondents may have limited knowledge or awareness of the specific strategies and efforts involved in the dissemination of Somali orthography. Without a comprehensive understanding of the dissemination process, respondents may feel hesitant to express a strong opinion on the matter. Additionally, the dissemination of orthography in Somalia may be influenced by various socio-cultural and political factors, which could contribute to differing perspectives among respondents. Factors such as regional differences, linguistic diversity, and historical context may shape individuals' perceptions of the effectiveness and impact of orthographic dissemination efforts. Furthermore, the interpretation of "No Opinion" as the average choice suggests that respondents may perceive the dissemination of orthography as a multifaceted issue with both positive and negative aspects. While some may recognize the importance of orthographic dissemination in promoting literacy and language standardization, others may have reservations or concerns about its implementation and effectiveness.

Overall, the result highlights the need for further research and discussion on the dissemination of Somali orthography and its impact on language standardization and literacy rates. By exploring the underlying factors contributing to respondents' uncertainty or indecision, future studies can provide deeper insights into the complexities of orthographic dissemination in Somalia and its implications for development and progress.

The Pearson correlation coefficient of orthography on dissemination being significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) with a significance of 64.5% indicates a strong relationship between orthographic reforms and the dissemination of Somali orthography. This finding aligns with existing literature on Somali orthography, which suggests that the development and dissemination of orthographic standards play a crucial role in language standardization and literacy promotion efforts. The significance of this correlation underscores the importance of orthographic reforms as a foundational component of language standardization initiatives. By establishing consistent and widely accepted orthographic standards, Somali

orthography can facilitate communication, education, and literacy development across different regions and communities within the country. The result also suggests that effective dissemination strategies are essential for maximizing the impact of orthographic reforms. Literature on language planning and policy implementation emphasizes the importance of targeted dissemination efforts, including educational programs, community engagement initiatives, and the provision of resources and support for literacy campaigns. Furthermore, the significant correlation between orthography and dissemination supports theoretical frameworks that highlight the interconnectedness of language policy, orthographic standardization, and socio-economic development. According to these theories, orthographic reforms can contribute to increased literacy rates, which in turn can lead to improved educational outcomes, economic opportunities, and overall societal progress.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the evolution and impact of Somali orthography on language standardization and literacy rates. They underscore the importance of orthographic reforms and effective dissemination strategies in promoting literacy and development in Somalia, aligning with related literature and theoretical frameworks in the field of language planning and policy.

The orthographic dissemination has impacted positively and dwindled the illiteracy rate sharply and expedited the rural-urban development campaign. The ground-breaking mass literacy campaign laid the foundation and the cornerstone of standardized national orthography that ultimately disseminated the entire country within a short period with staggering and trail-blazing outcomes. The Somali language did not have formal orthography until 1972 and the media, administration and academic instructions were all used in colonial languages such as English, and Italian, except Arabic which was deeply rooted in Islamic culture, furthermore, the illiteracy rate was over 90% before the urban-rural development which was implemented by the military Junta and was lauded locally as well as globally due to the elimination of illiteracy.

Foreign languages have been widely used before the national orthography was codified and standardized. The use of foreign languages in the country denied the majority of the population to have full access to equitable, inclusive, affordable and quality education as well as health, and employment. And many others were deprived of their fundamental and constitutional rights to have their orthographic language as well as many other vital services.

We also found evidence that orthographic dissemination had hugely influenced the core language skills (Reading, writing, speaking and listening) accordingly, the correlation indicates that orthographic dissemination might have a positive impact on - the urban development campaign that took place in Somalia and lasted only for a year and was orchestrated and sponsored by autocratic government of Siad Barre (UNESCO, Linguistic world report in 1989).

CONCLUSION

This study sought to evaluate the dissemination of Somali orthography and its impact on the rural-urban development campaign. The study discussed the orthographic dissemination, implementation mechanism and techniques and the impact it had on the mass literacy campaign. The research found that a strong correlation exists in terms of linguistic development and high literacy rate. The research also found that a strong correlation exists in terms of linguistic development and high literacy rate and the correlation was positive. The Somali Orthography was soon disseminated across the country and played a pivotal role in the nationwide mass literacy campaign which became effective and successful ultimately Somali citizens were taught how to read and write by applying systematically and conventionally their official Somali language and free from making errors in terms of orthographic writings and phonological variations and paved the way the annihilation of illiteracy rate by 50% throughout the country. The researcher also raised the current pervasive and structural problem facing the Somali national orthography as a result of the internecine clan conflict and its negative consequence which may lead to a potential loss of linguistic and cultural identities and the danger of declining language speakers and users, Hence the need for the dissemination of Somali national orthography which is mandatory to all Somali citizens specifically the academics and intellectuals residing at home and overseas.

The findings from the Study, indicate that local Universities have widely underestimated the role and the significance of Somali language and frequently marginalize native orthography and this is a grave concern that requires to be addressed urgently. In addition, the researcher recommends that future researchers should replicate this study to generalize the key findings. The researcher vividly recommends and proposes the federal authorities of Somalia and regional states fully invest in public academic institutions and be seriously involved in this issue and embark on free and open primary education to teach low-income and IDP' Children to their language and thousands of children will gain access to integrated and inclusive education in the crisis-affected areas of Somalia.

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the development, dissemination, and impact of Somali orthography on language standardization and literacy rates. The significant Pearson correlation coefficient of orthography on dissemination underscores the critical role of orthographic reforms in shaping language standardization efforts and promoting literacy in Somalia. The findings suggest that effective orthographic dissemination strategies are essential for maximizing the impact of orthographic reforms and advancing literacy campaigns. By establishing consistent orthographic standards and implementing targeted dissemination initiatives, Somali orthography can contribute to the reduction of illiteracy rates and foster socio-economic development in the country. This study highlights the importance of proper language planning and policy implementation in addressing literacy challenges and promoting development in countries that are still developing and vulnerable, such as Somalia. Further research and efforts are needed to continue supporting literacy initiatives and orthographic reforms. Ultimately, these efforts will foster progress and education advancement in Somalia and similar contexts.

Author Contribution

Mohamed Hussein Ahmed Mentalist conceived and designed the study, conducted the fieldwork, collected and analyzed the data, and prepared the first draft of the manuscript.

Margaret Nasambu Barasa provided academic supervision, contributed to the literature review, assisted in data interpretation, and critically revised the manuscript for intellectual content. Both authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to its submission for publication.

Declaration

The author confirms that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere nor is it under consideration by any other journal. All references and sources of information have been properly cited. The author accepts full responsibility for the content of the article and confirms adherence to all ethical and publication standards of the journal.

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Ethical Statement

This study does not involve any human participants, animals, or identifiable personal data. All sources and materials used in this research have been duly acknowledged. The research has been conducted in accordance with ethical standards for academic integrity and responsible scholarship.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Somali Researchers Association (SRA) (approval number SRA/ETH/36/2025). The SRA was chosen for its expertise in research ethics within the Somali context. The study's focus on sensitive topics such as Somali orthography, language standardization, and historical literacy campaigns necessitates careful ethical

consideration, and the SRA's understanding of the local cultural and ethical landscape is crucial. This research involved collaborations with authors from various institutions, including Mogadishu & SNU University Somalia and Kisii University, Kenya. Therefore, to ensure ethical oversight independent of individual university affiliations, seeking approval from the SRA, a recognized ethical review body in Somalia, was practical.

Data Availability:

The data supporting the findings of this study were collected through questionnaires and interviews with 200 participants from 17 administrative districts in the Benadir region of Somalia. The data include both fieldwork and interview responses. Due to confidentiality and ethical restrictions imposed by the Somali Researchers Association (SRA), these data are **not publicly available**, but they may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. No financial, personal, or institutional relationships have influenced the research findings or interpretations presented in this study.

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