Oblique Marking System in Somali Language: Comparison of the Common Somali and Karre Dialect

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Abstract

In Somali dialectology, comparisons on oblique marking particles, usually focusing on the similarities or dissimilarities of surface structures (cf. Lamberti 1986, Tosco 1997), identify the existence of two systems of oblique markers: a system of three markers specific to dialects between the two rivers, and another of four markers which characterizes Common Somali and Benaadir dialect [Maxaa-tiri dialectal group, in general]. Such a comparison does not tell us unfortunately the intimate connection between these two systems.

By conducting a detailed morpho-syntactic comparison between Karre dialect and Common Somali, we are able to perceive the historical relationship between the two systems of oblique marking, as well as the direction of change. It is also an argument testifying that these dialects belong to the same language.

Keywords: Somali Language, Karre Dialect, Oblique Markers

1. Introduction

Karre[1] is a Somali dialect spoken by Karre clan, one of the Somali clans, inhabits in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. In Somalia, they live in the Lower *Shabeelle* Region of southern Somalia, and they all speak Karre dialect (*or Af-Garre*).[2] Another group of Karre lives in north-eastern of Kenya, and *Liibaan* Zone of the Somali Region of Ethiopia, and they also speak Karre dialect which is highly influenced by the Oromo dialect of Boran.

This study will focus on Karre spoken in Lower Shabeelle Region of Somalia,[3] and more specifically on a comparison between this dialect and the Common Somali (CS). This comparison will be on particles very frequent in Somali phrase and that scholars call them by various names (such as prepositions by Bell, 1953, Andrzejewski, 1975, Appleyard, 1990, and Mansur, A. O & Puglielli, A., 1999 ; case-markers by Biber, 1984; adpositions by Saeed, 1999; preverbs by Tosco 1993 and Sasse, 2003; oblique markers by M. Ismail A. M. (2011).

Dialectal comparisons on this topic (see Lamberti 1986, Tosco 1997), always focusing on the similarities or dissimilarities of surface structures identify the existence of two systems of oblique markers: a system of three markers specific to dialects between the two rivers, and another of four markers which characterize Common Somali and Benadir dialects. Such a comparison does not tell us unfortunately the intimate connection between these two systems.

By conducting a detailed morpho-syntactic comparison between Karre and Common Somali[4], we are able to perceive the historical relationship between the two systems of oblique marking, as well as the direction of change.

In this study we use Somali alphabet. Except for sounds which are not in this alphabet and for which we use IPA such as the velar [ŋ] and palatal [ɲ] nasals and the mid central vowel [ə].

2. Problem of Designation

All these names given to the particles have at least one downside. If the particles have semantically a preposition meaning, syntactically they are related to the verb phrase, as defined by Saeed (1999: 163), while prepositions may also appear in a non-verbal domain. Concerning Biber's designation, who calls them case-*markers*, he points it out their syntactical function, without specifying their position in the sentence. Moreover, the term "case" is often associated to nouns, especially in Somali linguistics where it traditionally refers to indicate the four functions of the name (i.e. *absolutive*, *nominative*, *genitive* and *vocative*).

As for the notion of "preverb ", it specifies the particular position of these markers in the sentence, rather than their syntactic function. But we should note that they are not related to the verb as such but to the predicate as Banti (1987: 130-131) has shown it. It is why they can be placed not only before a verbal predicate, but also before a nonverbal predicate as in the following examples:

CS

1. **waa**   **ka**   **run**
   PRES   ø-ka   run
   COP   3MS.OBJ-ABL   true
   It is true (for them)

Karre

2. **uur**   **kə**   **baala**
   belly   LOC   divinity-have
   A soothsayer (Literally: Who can guess everything, knows everything).

Maay

3. **Galaŋ   ki   dhiiglə**
    hand   LOC   blood-have
    A murderer (Literally: « who has blood in one's hand»)

From all these considerations and some others found in Ismail, Abdirachid M. (2011:476-477), we prefer to call them « oblique markers » which highlights the syntactic function of the particles without introducing any ambiguity.

3.   Oblique Markers in Somali Dialects

The form and number of these markers are sometimes different within the same dialect, according to the scholars. For example Lamberti (1986: 100) indicates that the allative and ablative markers in Tunni are one and the same form, while Tosco (1997: 7) gives two dissimilar forms.

It is possible that this difference is due to the fact that the researchers have not surveyed the same sub-varieties. But it seems that the main reason of it is related to Sandhi phenomenon which applies to the vowel markers. Indeed, as we will see in this presentation, the markers vowels can change depending on the nature of the initial vowel of the verb that follows them. Without a thorough comparison between the oblique marking systems of the dialects, it is difficult to explain the gaps between the dialects on this matter.

The table below shows the oblique markers of the major Somali dialects. It takes into account the Sandhi phenomenon mentioned above:

Table 1: Oblique Markers of Somali Dialects

	Allative-Benefactive *To, for, towards*	Instrumental *with*	Ablative *from*	Comitative *with*
CS Benaadir	u	ku	ka	la
Ashraaf	iŋ	kv[5]	ka/kv	la
Karre	u	kv	ka/kv	la
Maay	iŋ	kv	kə	lə
Dabarre	iŋ u	kv	ka	lə
Tunni	i	kv	ku	il
Jiiddo	ha (?)	ha	xa, haa	il

Source: compiled by the author

Lamberti (1986) has synthetized, in the following table, the oblique markers of the Somali dialects based on a synchronic comparison:

Table 2: Oblique Markers of the Somali Dialects
(Synchronic Comparison)

Dialects	**A= 4 Oblique Markers** *(ku & ka being different)*	**B=3 Oblique Markers** *(ku & ka being same)*
Common Somali	A	-
Benaadir	A	-
Ashraaf	-	B
Interriverine	-	B

Source: Lamberti (1986)

Note: Interriverine dialects are the Somali dialects spoken in the area between Shabeelle and Jubba rivers in Southern Somalia.

These markers can appear a) in isolation and b) in combination with themselves or by suffixing some pronouns like object personal,

impersonal or reflexive pronouns. The oblique markers in isolation or in combination are always pre-posed to the verb:

4.1 Isolated Oblique Markers

CS

4. **Axmed   biyo   Baan   la   qaaday**
    Ahmed   water   ThP+1S   COM   take-1S.PAST
    I've taken some water with Ahmed.

Karre

5. **inoo   ka   yibidə**
    where   ABL   3MS-come-3MS.PAST
    From where did he come?

4.2 Combined Oblique Markers

The oblique markers can be combined together, while associating or not with personal object pronouns. The combination of these elements follows always the same order, namely Pr.OBJ/IMPERS/REFL-ALL/BEN-INST-ABL-COM, tables 3 & 4.[6] The four oblique markers can never appear in the same sentence:

Table 3 : Combined Oblique Markers of Karre Dialect

Pr. Objet / OM ➔		ALL u	INST/ABL kə	COM lə
(1S)	**i**	i	ii	il
(2S)	**ku**	ku	kaa	kul
(1Pl)	**nu**	nu	nuu	nul
(2Pl)	**ad**	ad	adoo	adal/adala

Source: *compiled by the author*

Table 4: Combined Oblique Markers of CS

Oblique Markers (OM)		ALL/BEN *u*	INST-ALL *ku*	ABL *ka*	COM *la*
Object Pronoun		ii (i+u)	igu (i+ku)	iga (i + ka)	ila (i +la)
(1S)	**i**	ii i+ (i+u)	iigu (i+(i+ku))	iiga (i+(i+ka))	iila (i+(i+la))
(2S)	**ku**	kuu ku + (i+u)	kuugu (ku+(i+ku))	kaaga (ku+(i+ka))	kuula (ku+(i+la))
(1Pl)	**na**	noo na + (i+u)	noogu (na+(i+ku))	nooga (na+(i+ka))	noola (na+(i+la))
(2Pl)	**idin**	idiin idin+(i+u)	idiinku (idin+(i+ku))	idiinka (idin +(i+ka))	idiinla (idiin+(i+la))

Source: compiled by the author

4. Resemblances and Dissemblance between CS and Karre Oblique Markers

As it is shown above in Lamberti's table, CS dialect has four markers (*la, u, ku, ka*), whereas Karre has three *(lv, u, kv)*. Here are the CS markers and the way they are used:

1) la (comitative – marks accompaniment) – *with.*

*Cali buu **la** socdaa*	He is walking (coming, etc.) with Ali.
*Caasha ayuu **la** qaadayaa*	He carries with Aisha.

2) u (allative-goal or benefactive) – *towards, to, for.*

*Helsinki buu **u** sii socdaa*	He is going to Helsinki.
*Cali buu **u** keenay*	He has brought it/him/her/them for Ali.

3) ku (instrumental and allative-goal) – *with, by, to, towards, etc.*

*Qaaddo buu **ku** cunayaa*	He eats with a spoon

*Baabuur buu **ku** qaaday*	He took him/her/them by car
*Jabuuti baan **ku** soconnaa*	We are going to Djibouti
*Shaqada ayay **ku** degdegeysaa*	She hurries for work
	(*litt. She hurries* to go to work)

4) ka (Ablative/directional-source / privative-restrictive) – *from.*

*Magaalada buu **ka** yimid*	He came from the city.
*Paris bay **ka** soo hadleen*	They have called from Paris.
*Warsame buu buuggii **ka** qaaday*	He has taken the book from Warsame.
*Lacagtii buu **ka** gooyay*	He has deprived (from) him/her/them the money.

Karre dialect has only three markers because the Instrumental-Allative and the Ablative have the same form, as it is indicated in the table below:

Table 5: Markers of Karre Dialect

	Comitative	Allative-Source Benefactive	Instrumental Allative-Goal	Ablative
CS	**la**	**u**	**ku**	**Ka**
Karre (Tosco, 1994)	**lv[7]**	**u**	**kv[5]**	

Source: *compiled by the author*

The question is then: how *kv* marker in Karre matches with *ku* and *ka* in CS system? To answer to this question, we need to consider the oblique system of each dialect so that we could see the dynamic correspondence between the two systems. In fact, we will see that we have here an evolutionary system which passes from a system of three markers represented by Karre to a system of four markers represented by CS dialect, which has innovated its original system by creating two distinctive *k-* markers, allocating to each marker a fixed vowel, namely *–u* (k**u**) and *–a* (k**a**), as it is explained in the following paragraphs.

5.1 The Comitative Marker: *la* (CS), *lv* (Karre)

For this marker, also known as associative case marker; we have an exact correspondence between the two systems, except that the vowel of Karre marker tends to assimilate with the first vowel of the verb, especially if the verb begins with a vowel (see examples 9, 10, 11):

CS

6. **Axmed   biyo   baan   la   qaadey**
   Ahmed   water   ThP.1S   COM   bring. PAST.1S
   I have brought some water with Ahmed

CS

7. **way   is<u>la</u>   socdaan**
   ToP.3PL   REFL.COM   walked.PRES.3PL
   They walked together (they are together, they are coming together etc.).

Karre

8. **waa   is<u>lə</u>   sodiiŋ**
   ToP   REFL.COM   walk.PRES.3PL
   They walked together (they are together; they are coming together, etc.).

Karre

9. **huɲurə   lu   uŋ**
   Food.ART.M   COM   eat.IMP.2S
   Eat the food with him/her/ them!

10. **lə[8] firi**
    COM see.IMP.2S,
    See with him/her/them!

11. **lu ub**
    COM.plug.IMP.2S,
    Plug with it!

5.2 The Allative-Benefactive Marker: *u*

This marker has the same form in both CS and in Karre. However it does not play exactly the same syntactic function in the two dialects. In the CS, the scholars have noticed two functions for it: an allative (ALL) function, which indicates the direction of a process, and a dative-benefactive function (BEN) which shows an action realized for the benefit of somebody or something. There is also another function for this marker, rarely noted by the scholars, which indicates the cause (CAUS)[9]. In Karre, this morpheme *u* introduces only allative and cause functions.

5.2.1 Allative function

This characteristic of *u*, that Sasse (2003: 123) describes as "location at which or onto which something moves or is moved" has a purely locative-directional meaning:

CS

12. **Xamar   buu   u   socdaa**
     Xamar   baa+uu   u   socdaa
     Hamar   ThP+3MS   ALL   go-3MS.PRES
     He is going to Hamar [another name of Mogadishu].

CS

13. **Cali   baan   u   tegeyaa**
     Cali   baa+aan   u   Tegeyaa
     Ali   ThP+1S   ALL   go-1S.PRES
     I'm going to visit Ali (Lit. I'm going to Ali).

Karre

14.   **Hamaraa   u   sheedaa**
       Hamar+aa   u   Sheedaa
       Hamar+ThP   ALL   go.PRES
       I'm going to Hamar.

This allative function can be confused sometimes with the dative meaning of this marker like in constructions (14), (18) and (19):

CS

15. **aabbeheed**   **baan**   **u**   **wadaa**
    aabbo+ka+eed   baa+aan   u   Wadaa
    Father+ART.M+GEN   ThP+1S   **DAT**   take. Someone to-PRES.1S
    I'm taking her to her father.

Karre

16.   **ay**   **wutaa ?**
      INT   take. Someone to -1S.PRES
      Who are you leading?

17. **eleɲoo**   **wudaa**
     girl+ThP   lead-1S.PRES
      I'm leading a girl.

18. **ay**   **u**   **wutaa ?**
     INT   **DAT**   lead-2S.PRES
      To whom are you leading her?

19. **oog-eed**   **u**   **wudaa**
     father+GEN.3FS   **DAT**   conduire-1S.PRES
      I'm leading her to her father.

But this confusion between allative, dative and benefactive functions is not unique to Somali dialects. It is related to the semantic and syntactic relation between these three functions. Indeed, allative function can cover the same area as benefactive and dative when the action described by the verb is directed towards something or someone. Besides, in a typological perspective, Schimidtke - Bode (2009: 1) demonstrates that benefactive markers "*share their territory with allative, recipient, and more general*

dative markers and are historically related to these other functions in intricate ways…”. So it is not surprising that this marker can be used as an allative marker by the two dialects, and as a benefactive only by one dialect like CS as we can see below.

5.2.2 Benefactive function

CS and Karre adopt two different methods to mark the benefactive: CS uses the allative *u* with an object pronoun (when available), while Karre employs only object pronouns when they exist indeed. If the object pronoun does not exist, as it is the case for the third persons, the two dialects use *u* morpheme to express the benefactive function:

CS

20. **biyo**   **ii**   **qaad**
    biyo   **i+u**   qaad
    water   **1S.Ob+ALL**   take-2S.IMP
    Offer me some water.

CS

21. **biyo**   **u**   **qaad**
    biyo   **ø-u**   qaad
    water   **3P.OBJ-ALL**   take-2S.IMP
    Offer him/her/them some water.

Karre

22. **biyi**   **i**   **qaad**
    water   **1S.Ob**   take-2S.IMP
    Offer me some water.

23. **biyi**   **u**   **qaad**

biyi	**ø-u**	**qaad**
water	**3P.OBJ-ALL**	take-2S.IMP

   Offer him/her/them some water.

Here we see that there is an important difference between the two dialects since the construction (22) in Karre is not possible in CS, * *biyo i qaad*[10]; the cause being that the allative morpheme *u* should obligatorily be used in CS, in this case.

For the verb "to give", it is unnecessary to mark the idea of a beneficiary (since this verb implies a beneficiary whether it is explicit or not). It is why both CS and Karre use only the object pronouns (without the allative marker *u*) *for* the 1P and 2P, for which the object pronouns exist:

CS and Karre

24.	**shaah**	**i**	**sii**
	tea-IND	**1S.Ob**	give-2S.IMP

   Give me some tea.

With the object pronouns of the 3rd person, the allative morpheme *u* will not be employed in both dialects:

CS and Karre

25.	**shaah**	**Ø sii**
	tea-IND	**3P** give-2S.IMP

   Give him/her/them some tea.

Even if in CS *u* is still used as an allative marker, and more precisely as a directional-goal marker, there is a slight difference between it and *ku,* the other directional-goal marker. But to understand this difference and the relationship between the different particles of Somali oblique system marking, we need to consider all the functions of *ku* and *ka* also.

5.3 Allative-Locative and Instrumental Marker: *ku*

The principal functions of this marker are allative-locative and instrumental. But it marks also the cause and the illative. The main difference is that in Karre the vowel of the marker assimilates with the verb first vowel as it is the case for the comitative marker, whereas it is not the case in CS:

5.3.1 Instrumental

CS

26.	**qalinka**	**baan**	**ku**	**qorayaa**	
	qalin+ka	baa+aan	**ku**	qorayaa	
	pen+ART.M	ThP+1S	**INST**	write-1S.PRES	

I'm writing with the pen.

27	**fandhaal**	**buu**	**ku**	**cunayaa**	**bariiska**
	fandhaal	baa+uu	**ku**	cunayaa	bariis+ka
	spoon (wooden)	ThP+3MS	**INST**	eat-3MS. PROG.PRES	rice+ART.M

He is eating the rice with a wooden spoon.

In Karre, this function is also expressed by a marker having the unvoiced occlusive velar *k*v. But the vowel of this marker, in contrast to CS, assimilates with the stem vowel of the verb. Compare constructions (28) and (29) with construction (30):

Karre

28.	**dheregə**	**ha**	**ku**	**uŋŋə**
	dhere-gə	ha	**ku**	uŋŋə
	pot+ART.M	JUSS	**INST**	eat-2S-NEG

Do not eat in the pot!

29.	**kalaaŋ**	**ku**	**us**

Spoon (wooden)   **INST**   take-2SIMP
   Take it with a spoon!

30. **kalaaŋ**   **ka**   **qaad**
    Spoon (wooden)   **INST**   take-2S.MP
     Take it with a spoon!

Unlike Karre, in CS, an assimilation of the vowel of the marker may change the meaning of the sentence: *qaaddada ku qaad*, "Take it with the spoon", *qaaddada ka qaad*, "Take the spoon from him/her/it/them". To express this opposition of action in Karre, we need to use verbs indicating contrary actions as *ki rid* (put in it) and *ki bihi* (put it out), whereas in CS we will use the same verb opposed by *ku* and *ka*: *ku rid* and *ka rid*.

5.3.2 Illative

CS

31. **biyo**   **bay**   **ku**   **shubeen**   **Joogga**
    biyo   baa+ay   **ILL**   shubeen   joog+ka
    water   ThP+3Pl   **ILL**   pour.PAST.3Pl   jug+ART.M
     They have poured water into the jug.

Karre

32. **biyi**   **iyaa**   **ku**   **shubeen**   **haanə**
    water   ThP   **ILL**   shubeen   container+ART.F
     They have poured water into the container.

33. **aqalə**   **ki**[11]   **rid**   **sanduuqa**
    aqal+ta   **ki**   rid   sanduuq+ka
    things+ART.F   **ILL** put-2S.IMP   box.ART.M
     Put the things in the box!

From these examples, we see that Karre does not distinguish *ka*, *ki*, and *ku* syntactically. They are allomorphs expressing the same illative

function. The basic and unmarked morpheme seems to be *ka* (*see table 6*) the vowel harmonizing itself with that of the verb which follows it.

5.3.3 Allative

The allative function of *ku* in CS is unambiguous, even if it may seem complex. It indicates a centrifugal movement from the speaker toward another person or location. This function is often named as *goal*, to distinguish it from the marker *ka* which indicates the *source*:

34. | **Jabuuti** | **buu** | **ku** | **sii** | **socdaa** |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    | Jabuuti | baa+uu | **ku** | sii | socdaa |
    | Djibouti | ThP+3MS | **ALL.DIR** | AND | go-3MS.PRES |

    He is going to Djibouti.

35. | **xafiiska** | **bay** | **ku** | **ordaysaa** |
    |---|---|---|---|
    | xafiiska | baa+ay | **ku** | ordaysaa |
    | Office | ThP+3FS | **ALL.DIR** | run-3FS.PRES |

    She runs to the office.

In this directional-goal function, *ku* competes with *u* in CS. We note however a slight semantic difference between the two markers in this role. For instance *Axmed baan ku socdaa* has a purely directional-goal significance, meaning "I am going to Ahmed's house" (or wherever he can be). *With u,* the sentence expresses an *intention,* with or without a movement: *Axmed baan **u** socdaa* means "I came for Ahmed" (a) *or* "I'm here for Ahmed" *(b)* as well as "I am in the way to Ahmed" *(c),* "I'm going to visit Ahmed" *(d).* The first two interpretations are linked with the dative-benefactive value of *u.*

It is noticed that the young generation of CS speakers uses less *u* as a directional, but almost exclusively as a benefactive. To express the meaning of *a, b, c,* and *d*, they would rather use correspond sentences

such as *Axmed baan doonayaa (a)* or *Axmed baan u yimid (b)* or *Axamed baan ku socdaa (c, d)*. This shows that the two particles *u* and *ku* are about to differentiate themselves by specializing respectfully in benefactive and allative-directional-goal functions. To understand the whole process of this change, we need to consider all the functions of *ku* and *ka*.

The movement expressed by *ku* can be abstract in both dialects. It indicates not only an action or a physical movement, but also an intention or a psychological movement directed towards someone or something, as it can be noted from the following sentences:

CS

36. **Faarax** **baan** **ku** **qoslaynaa**
    Farah ThP+3MS **ALL.N-DIR** laugh-3PL.PRES
    We are laughing at Farah.

37. **Cismaan** **ayuu** **ku** **xanaaqay**
    Osman ThP+3MS **ALL.N-DIR** get-angry-3MS.PAST
    He has got angry against Osman.

Karre

38. **Usmaan** i**yaa** **ka** **qosolə**
    Osman ThP **ALL.N-DIR** laugh-1S/3MS.PAST
    I am laughing at Osman/He is laughing at Osman.

39. **Usmaan** **iyaa** **ka** **dherefə**
    Usmaan iyaa **ka** dherefə
    Osman ThP **ALL.N-DIR** get-angry-3MS.PAST+CONJ
    I am angry against Osman.

Here is a summary of *ku* functions in both dialects, Common Somali and Karre dialects:

Table 6: Functions of Marker "ku" in CS & Karre Dialects

| | INSTRUMENTAL | CAUSAL[12] | | ILLATIVE | ALLATIVE[13] | |
		FM	VI		DIR-Phy.Mov	DIR Abst.Mov
CS	**ku**	**-**	**ku**	**ku**	**ku**	**ku**
Karre	**ka** (with the possibility of a vocalic assimilation which give rise to allomorphs *ku, ki, kə)*	**-**	**ku**	**ka** (with the possibility of a vocalic assimilation which give rise to allomorphs *ku, ki, kə)*	**-**	**ka** (with the possibility of a vocalic assimilation which give rise to allomorphs *ku, ki, kə)*

Source: compiled by the author

5.4 The Marker of the Ablative: *ka* (CS) and *kv* (Karre)

The Somali linguistic literature describes this morpheme as an ablative marking the source of an action. But this general function can be sub-divided into four different roles: 1) Separation, 2) Locative-Directional-Source, 3) Locative-Static, and 4) Comparison. These different values of the marker have in common the fact they all involve a movement from a specific location, explicit or not, concrete or abstract, to something or someone.

5.4.1 Separative Function

In this role, the marker *ka* does not change its form in CS, whereas in Karre, its vowel changes according to the first vowel of the verb, as we have seen for the other markers:

CS

40. **alaabtaada**   **meesha**   **ka**   **qaad**

 things+POSS.2S   place.ART.F   **SEP**   take-2S.IMP

 Take your things from there!

Karre

41. **aqalə**   **meesha**   **ka**   **qaad**

 things+POSS.2S   place+ART.F   **SEP**   take-2S.IMP

   Same meaning as (40).

42. **eleni**   **ku**   **fur**

 girl+ART.F   **SEP**   divorce-2S.IMP

   Divorce the girl from him.

43. **ootə**   **ki**   **shiid**

 Brushwood-fence.ART.F   **SEP**   move-2S.IMP

 Remove the brushwood fence (from there!

5.4.2   Comparative Function

Here the marker has the same phonetic form in CS and Karre, namely *ka*:

CS

44. **Axmed**   **wuu**   **ka**   **weyn yahay**

 Axmed   wuu   **Ø-ka**   weyn yahay

 Ahmed   PTo+3MS   **3P-COMP**   be.big-3MS.PRES

 Ahmed is bigger than him/her/them.

Karre

45. **Ahmad**   **waa**   **ka**   **wiiŋ**   yahə

 Ahmad   waa   **Ø-ka**   wiiŋ   yahə

 Ahmed   PTo   **3P-COMP**   big   be-3MS.PRES

   Ahmed is bigger than him (her/them).

When *ka* has a comparative value in Karre, the marker does not change according to the first vowel of the verb. Its form is always *ka* whatever of the vowel of the verb which follows it*:*

46. **nalah**　　　　**waa**　**ka**　　　**iftiiŋ badaŋ yahaa**
　　torch.POSS.2S　ToP　**COMP**　light　much　be-3MS.PREST
　　Your torch has much more light.

47. **waa**　　**ka**　　　**suurle**　　　**yahaa**
　　ToP　　**COMP**　goodness+have　be-3MS.PREST
　　He is better than him.

If the form of the marker does not change, is it because these two functions – *comparative* and *directional-source* – are the original functions of the marker, while the others (separative, locative and static) would derive from a reinterpretation of a more recent development ? It is an assumption which would explain this oddity, but which needs to be confirmed through a theoretical or a typological comparison.

5.4.3 Directional-Source Function (DIR- S)

The marker appears with a verb of movement which describes a movement, a change from a location, a state:

CS
48. **Baariis　bay**　　　**ka**　　　**yimaadeen**
　　Paris　　ThP+3PL　**DIR-S**　　3PL-come-3PL.PAST
　　They have come from Paris.

Karre
49. **Hamaraa**　　　　**ka**　　**yibidə**
　　Hamar+aa　　　　**ka**　　yibidə

Hamar + ThP   **DIR-S**   3MS.come-3MS.PAST

I have come from Hamar/He has come from Hamar.

50.   **waa   ka   ilbaha**

ToP   **DIR-S**   abandon (lifestyle))-3MS.PAST.

He has abandoned a particular lifestyle

(always considered as backward).

As for the comparison, the vowel marker does not change here too, according to the phonetic form of the verb that follows it.

5.4.4 Locative-Stative

The marker appears here with stative verbs such *ahaw* (to be), *yaal* (to remain, to be installed), *jir* (to exist), etc.:

CS

51.   **dhankee   bay   alaabtu   ka   taalaa**

dhan+kee   **baa+ay**   alaab+t+u   **ø+LOC**   taalaa

Side+INT   ThP+3FS   things+ART.F+NOM   **3PL.OBJ+LOC**   3FS.remain-
                                                             3S..PREST

Which side from it/him/her/them are the things?

Karre

52.   **buukə   birko   ka   yaalaa**

buuk+kə   bir+ko   ø+ka   Yaalaa

book+ART.M   side+IND   3P.Ob+**LOC**   3MS.remain.PREST

The book is by its/his/he/their side.

We see here also that there is a difference between Karre and CS, since in the latter there is vowel assimilation of the marker, and not in the former:

53. **dhina'akanaa**   **ki**   **higaa**

    dhina'+a+kan+aa   **ø+ki**   higaa

    side+ART.M+DEM.M+ThP   3P.OBJ+**LOC**   be-3MS.PREST

    It is in this side from him/her/them.

Table 7: functions of the ablative marker "ka" in CS & Karre Dialects

	ABLATIVE			
	SEPARATION	COMPARISON	DIRECTIONAL-SOURCE	LOC-STATIVE
CS	**ka**	**ka**	**ka**	**ka**
Karre	**ka** (with the possibility of a vocalic assimilation*)*	**ka**	**Ka**	**ka** (with the possibility of a vocalic assimilation*)*

Source: *compiled by the author*

Except the phonological difference related to the possibility or not of a vocalic assimilation of the marker, there is a perfect correspondence between the two dialects ablative markers.

In the following table, we summarize the comparison of Karre and CS oblique system marking:

Table 8: Comparison of Oblique System Marking in CS & Karre Dialect

Function	Meaning	CS	Karre	Observation
COMITATIVE	**Comitative/accompany**	**la**	**lv**	Vowel assimilation of the marker in Karre.
ALLATIVE	**Directional-Goal**	**u**	**u**	Restrictive usage of *u* in this role by CS speakers.
	Benefactive	**u**	**ø**	Karre uses object pronouns to indicate the beneficiary, whereas CS uses *u*.
	Dative	**u**	**u**	Same usage in Karre and in CS.
	Cause-Consequence	**u**	**u**	Same usage in Karre and in CS.
LOCATIVE-INSTRUMENTAL	**Instrumental**	**ku**	**kv**	Vowel assimilation of the marker in Karre.
	Directional-Goal	**ku**	**ø**	Karre uses **u** for this function.
	Illative	**ku**	**kv**	Vowel assimilation

				of the marker in Karre.
	Locative-stative (?)	ku	kv	Vowel assimilation of the marker in Karre.
ABLATIVE	**Directional-Source**	ka	ka	Original function of *ka.*
	Separative	ka	kv	Vowel assimilation of the marker in Karre.
	Comparative	ka	ka	Original function of *ka.*
	Locative-stative	ka	kv	Vowel assimilation of the marker in Karre.

Source: *compiled by the author*

We have seen that Karre employs only *u* for directional-goal, while CS uses both *u* and *ku,* even if *u* usage in this role is weakening, because it has acquired also a benefactive role. We infer from our analysis that the primary function of *u* was directional-goal in both dialects. It marks a movement towards something or someone. We have pointed it out that in both dialects the benefactive function was marked by using object personal pronouns just as it is still the case in Karre for all persons. But

after the loss of 3rd object pronoun, *u* was used by the CS and Karre to mark the beneficiary as it is the case still in both dialects. The divergence begins when CS has generalized this last process to all personal pronouns and gave to *u* mainly a benefactive value. While Karre has continued to use the object pronouns to mark the beneficiary, for all persons, except for 3rd persons. From that, we see that CS has introduced an innovation which has forced it to adjust all its oblique marking system to this innovation.

In fact, after this first change, CS have created a new marker to replace *u* allative function, by reanalysing the ablative *kv* (directional-source) as a combination of *k+vowel*, *k* being interpreted as having a directional meaning. By associating this consonant with *u* which is interpreted as having its original meaning of *goal,* the directional-goal marker *ku* is created. In this way, CS has got two markers, *ka* and *ku,* both indicating a directional movement, but in an opposite way. This opposition is marked morphologically through the differentiation of the vowels, *a* and *u,* which will no longer assimilate with the verb vowels since they are significantly marked. The vowel *a,* for the ablative marker, has been chosen probably because it is the unmarked vowel in CS, in which we encounter in the articles (*ka, ta*), the demonstratives (*kaa, taa*), the discursive particles (*waa*, *baa*) whereas the other vowels, such as *-u* and *-i,* are usually marked, indicating *anaphoric* or *nominative* case.

6. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated concretely that Somali southern dialects can help to understand the evolution of the common Somali. Dialectological studies are still seen in many African and Arab countries as taboo, because they consider that these dialects may hinder national unity. However, if the dialectal phenomena is not recognized

as an outstanding heritage and is not taken advantage of it, especially in Somalia, there is a risk of losing what can help to understand better Somali language evolution and, beyond that, Somalis history itself. That is why this study has attempted to contribute to a greater awareness of the significance of studying Somali dialects. Besides, recognizing dialects is recognizing diversity, integrating differences, going beyond the compartmentalized identity claims, in one word, it is empowering citizenship.

Notes

[1] The speakers of this dialect pronounce their name and their tongue *"Karre"* with the unvoiced velar *k*, while the other Somali speakers call them "Garre" with the voiced velar, which is often used in linguistic literature.

[2] Karre clan mainly lives in *Qoryooley* and *Awdheegle* districts of Lower Shabeelle Region of Somalia. They are pastoralists, specially camel herders, and agropastoralists, a mixture of agriculture and livestock herding.

[3] I would like to express my gratitude to my informant for this dialect, *Xuseen Cabdiraxman Maxamed*, who, with patience, helped me thorough this work. I also extend my thanks to Dr *Cabdishakuur Sheekh Xasan Faqi* for his consistent suggestions.

[4] The standard or common Somali is based on *maxaatiri* dialect, particularly its variety of Northern Somali Dialect. *Maxaatiri* dialect is spoken in the major part of Somalis territories in the Horn of Africa, except between the two rivers of Shabeelle and Jubba in southern Somalia. Most of its speakers are nomadic pastoralists (usually camel herders). Even if there is some internal variation within this dialect, through all these regions, it is one of the most homogenous among Somali dialects.

[5] *v (= vowel)* which varies according to the initial vowel of the verb.

[6] For more details, please refer to Ismail (2011).

[7] Vowel which assimilates with the first vowel of the verb.

[8] The informant pronounces it sometimes as *[li]*.

[9] See Mohamed Ismail, 2011.

[10] Naturally with a different accentual pattern, we will have a totally different meaning which is: *water*

[11] My Karre informant pronounces sometimes ki rid, and sometimes kə rid.

[12] This function can be found with details in Mohamed Ismail (2011; 2015). *FM =cause related to Force Majeure ; VI= cause related to individual will*

[13] *DIR-Phy.Mov=Physical movement; Abst. Mov=Abstract movement.*

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Abreviations:

ABL : ablative	ABS : absolute
Adj : adjective	ALL : allative
ANAPH : anaphoric	AND : andative
ART : article	BEN : benefactive
CAUS : causative	COMP : comparative
COP : copule	DAT : dative
CS: Common Somali	DEM : demonstrative
DEF : definite	F(EM) : feminine
DIR : directional	GEN : genitive
FOC : focus	ILL : illative
HAB : habitual	IMPERS : impersonal
IMP : imperative	INSTR : instrumental
IND : indefinite	INTENS : Intensive

INT : interrogative	M : masculine,
LOC : locative	NOM : nominative
NEG : negative	NUM : numeral
CS : Common Somali	P : person (3P: 3rd pers.)
OBJ : object	PL : plural
PAST : past (Indefinite, Progressive, Imperfect)	Pr : pronom
POSS : possessive	PREST : present (absolute, progressive, habitual)
PRES : presentative	REST : restrictive
REFL : reflexive	SUBJ : subjunctive
S : singular	ThP : Thematic Particle
SUJ : subject	VEN : venitive
ToP : Topicalisation Particle	

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