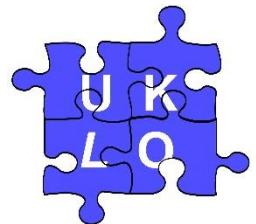


Your name:

# The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2016



## Problem 8. Somali verbs (20 marks)

Somali is spoken by approximately 16.6 million people in Somalia and neighbouring countries in East Africa.

The table on the next page shows two past-tense forms for a number of Somali verbs. These forms show whether the verb's subject is 'I' or 'he'. The challenge for you is to work out how these forms are related to each other. To help you, here are some notes on how the letters are pronounced:

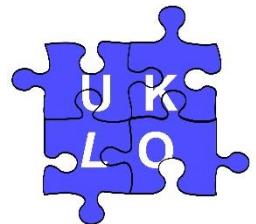
- Vowel sounds are much as in English.
  - A double vowel indicates that the vowel is long.
- Consonants are also as in English except for
  - the 'guttural' consonants produced at the back of the mouth (in Latin, guttur means 'throat'):
    - <q><sup>1</sup>: a voiced uvular plosive, like a 'g' but pronounced at the back of the throat.
    - <kh>: a bit like the 'ch' in Scottish *loch* but pronounced at the back of the throat.
    - <x>: a voiceless pharyngeal fricative, hard to describe, but a bit like a heavy 'h'.
    - <c>: same as x, but voiced.
    - <'>: a glottal stop, like the sound in the middle of *uh-oh* (IPA ? ).
  - <dh>: a single sound (a 'retroflex' d, produced by curling the tongue-tip back)

As in English, <sh> is a single sound, as in *shell*.

**Question 8.** Some cells in this table are empty except for a row-column identifier (e.g. '3a'). Fill the corresponding cells in the table on the answer paper.

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<sup>1</sup> <...> is the standard notation for letters, in contrast with /.../ or [...] for sounds.

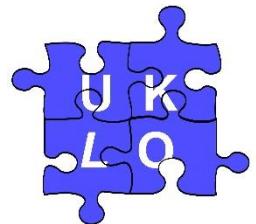


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	(a) 'I read', etc.	(b) 'He read', etc.	(c) meaning
1	akhriyay	akhriday	read
2	aragay	aragtay	saw
3	3a	bartay	taught
4	ba'ay	ba'day	was destroyed
5	baajiyay	5b	prevented
6	baaqay	baaqday	announced
7	baxay	baxday	left
8	bi'iyay	8b	destroyed
9	bilaabay	9b	began
10	10a	cuntay	ate
11	cabay	cabtay	drank
12	cararay	carartay	ran away
13	daaqay	13b	grazed
14	dhacay	14b	fell
15	dhisay	dhistay	built
16	diiday	diiday	refused
17	dilay	dishay	killed
18	faraxay	18b	was happy
19	gaadhay	gaadhay	reached
20	galay	20b	entered
21	go'ay	21b	cut
22	22a	heshay	found
23	horjeeday	horjeeday	opposed
24	kacay	24b	rose
25	keenay	keentay	brought
26	korodhay	korodhay	increased
27	qaaday	27b	took
28	tagay	tagtay	went
29	xidhay	29b	closed
30	walaqaqay	30b	stirred

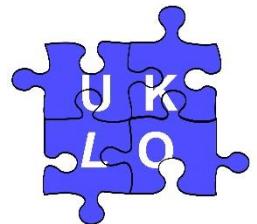
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# The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2016



## Problem 8: Somali verbs (20 marks)

3a	5b	8b
9b	10a	13b
14b	18b	20b
21b	22a	24b
27b	29b	30b



# The UK Linguistics Olympiad 2016

## Problem 8: Somali verbs (20 marks)

3a <b>baray</b>	5b <b>baajiday</b>	8b <b>bi'iday</b>
9b <b>bilaabtay</b>	10a <b>cunay</b>	13b <b>daaqday</b>
14b <b>dhacday</b>	18b <b>faraxday</b>	20b <b>gashay</b>
21b <b>go'day</b>	22a <b>helay</b>	24b <b>kacday</b>
27b <b>qaaday</b>	29b <b>xidhay</b>	30b <b>walaaqday</b>

Scoring: one point for each completely correct form. No half marks. (max 15)

### Comment

The 'I form' (column #a) is formed by adding <ay> to the stem, while the 'he form' (column #b) is formed by adding <tay> to the stem, but with some changes:

- <t> changes to <d> after <q> (#6, 13, 30), <c> (#14, 24), <x> (#7, 18), and <'> (#4, 21), the guttural consonants; the examples for <c> require the solver to recognize that <c> acts like its voiceless counterpart <x>, as no example ending in <c> is given.
- <y> disappears before the added <t>, which changes to <d> (#1, 5, 8)
- <l+t> changes to <sh> - a very strange change!!! (#17, 20, 22)
- <d+t> or <dh+t> drops the <t> (#16, 19, 23, 26)