

6.10 Somali Accent (Hyman 1981)

In Somali many pairs of masculine and feminine nouns are distinguished solely by accent. Some singular – plural forms are differentiated in the same way, plural being treated as a subtype of feminine. Three accent types are transcribed here: falling accent [â], rising accent [ã], and plain high-pitched accent [á]. The rising and falling accents are restricted to syllables containing a long vowel or diphthong; the high-pitched accent is restricted to syllables containing a short vowel. Three subtypes of accent shift are distinguished below. Relying on the notion “mora,” develop an analysis that reduces the accent representation and shift to a single factor.

(1) shift in accent location

ínan	‘boy’	inán	‘girl’
nácas	‘stupid man’	nacás	‘stupid woman’
kálax	‘ladle’	kaláx	‘ladles’
bállí	‘water reservoir’	ballí	‘water reservoirs’

(2) shift in accent type

damê:r	‘young donkey’ masc.	demê:r	‘young donkey’ fem.
darmâ:n	‘colt’	darmã:n	‘filly’
tû:g	‘thief’	tũ:g	‘thieves’
êi	‘dog’	ēi	‘dogs’

(3) shift in both location and type

qã:lín	‘young camel’ masc.	qa:lín	‘young camel’ fem.
So:mã:li	‘Somali man’	So:ma:lí	‘Somali people’