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Gorwaa, Tanzania – Language Contexts

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Language Name:	Gorwaa
Language Family:	South Cushitic (Afro-Asiatic)
ISO 639-3 Code:	gow
Glottolog Code:	goro1270
Population:	132,748
Location:	-4.22, 35.75
Vitality rating:	6b-7

Abstract

Gorwaa is a South Cushitic language, spoken in north-central Tanzania. The number of speakers is approximately 132,748, and though used frequently in rural areas, many speakers are shifting to Swahili for everyday use, especially in the larger towns. Gorwaa is the name of the ethnic group, as well as the name of the language.

Gorwaa is closely related to the other South Cushitic languages of Tanzania, namely: Iraqw, Alagwa, and Burunge; there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility between Gorwaa and Iraqw. That being said, speakers from both communities consider themselves as two separate ethnic groups, and there are several salient lexical and morphosyntactic differences between Gorwaa and Iraqw.

This paper provides an overview of the larger context in which Gorwaa is spoken. Section 2 sketches the history of its speaker community. Section 3 outlines the relationships (both genetic and areal) that exist between Gorwaa and other languages in the area. Section 4 provides details on language use and language attitudes (including speaker numbers, language vitality, and how speakers perceive Gorwaa). Section 5 explains the different names used (and currently in use) to label the Gorwaa language. Section 6 mentions important works about Gorwaa which precede this one. Section 7 provides some in-depth analysis of important facets of Gorwaa culture and society, and how in turn this is manifested in the Gorwaa language. Section 8 concludes the discussion.

Keywords: Gorwaa, South Cushitic, Language documentation and description, Languages of Tanzania, Tanzanian Rift Valley Area

1. Introduction

1.1 A note on ethnography

Use of the term ‘the Gorwaa’,¹ possibly suggests an underlying assumption that they are a homogeneous mass, somehow bound to the dictates of tradition or ‘tribe’, however this is not correct. To adapt Sanders’ (2008) comment on the Ihanzu, another Tanzanian group, the Gorwaa are a collection ultimately composed of individuals: some practice religion, some do not, some possess high levels of Western education, political power, and economic advantage, some do not. There are families living in towns and cities throughout Tanzania who probably identify as Gorwaa, and there are, no doubt, a very few who live in Europe, USA, or other parts of ‘the West’. This diversity would seem to confound any coherent approach to writing about ‘the Gorwaa’, if it were not for the fact that the Gorwaa often employ this term to essentialise themselves. The image of the Gorwaa presented below therefore attempts to capture how the Gorwaa imagine themselves. ‘On this score it is important to note that anthropological projects that essentialize Others are not the same thing as anthropological projects like this one that aim to write about and through Others’ projects of essentialization’ (Sanders 2008: 207n5).

That being said, this paper offers a discussion of the Gorwaa language context, which is necessarily tentative on matters relating to Gorwaa culture.

1.2 The research project

The research reported here is part of a documentary-descriptive project which I began in 2012 with fieldwork for an MA Linguistics dissertation at the University of Dar es Salaam, and continued in 2014 through to the present, including Harvey (2018b).² My focus has been on descriptive and formal analysis of language structure, and this is reflected in the published analyses to date, which include adaptation of Swahili loanwords into Gorwaa (Harvey & Mreta 2017), morphosyntax of nominal gender and number (Harvey 2018a), and nominal morphosyntax (Harvey 2018b). An archive deposit of all materials collected thus far has been created (Harvey 2017); this is both

¹ The Gorwaa people and language are also sometimes referred to as Fiomu. For more information on alternative names for the language and people, see Section 5.

² MA studies were supported by a Commonwealth Scholarship. Doctoral studies were supported, in part, by an Endangered Languages Documentation Programme grant (ID: IGS0285).

openly accessible and continually enriched with new material, including transcriptions, translations, and linguistic annotations. The archive deposit is meant to be multi-use, and has a wealth of audiovisual recordings, which may be of interest to scholars across the humanities and beyond. Harvey (2018c) presents 134 lines of a Gorwaa-language story, transcribed and translated into English, and given linguistic glosses. It is intended to give an idea of possible future uses of the archive deposit, as well as of the richness of the cultural material therein.

Over time, this project has grown from the pursuit of a single, foreign linguist into a large community effort, with the research agenda increasingly in the hands of Gorwaa people. To date, the project has involved over 125 community members, primarily as language consultants. Recently, as part of a Firebird Fellowship, Gorwaa people have also been trained in audiovisual language documentation methods, and are currently undertaking self-directed data collection, following both their own personal interests, and the guidance of community elders and advisors. There are two emerging objectives:

1. continuing the development of a large, multi-use audiovisual documentation of the Gorwaa language in its myriad domains of use, and;
2. encouraging local involvement and interest in the language, its use, and the rich culture in which it is embedded.



Figure 1. The author and local Gorwaa-language researchers (left to right: Christina Gwa'i, Festo Massani, Andrew Harvey, Stephano Edward, Paschal Bu'u), July 2018, Babati (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey

1.3 The data

Examples presented below which are available in the archive deposit are provided with a citation to identify the recording and particular utterance. Citations occur in square brackets following the English free translation (bolded in example (1)).³

- (1) *inós a Gormo*
 ‘He is a Gorwaa person.’ [20160119f.12]

2. History

Much of the available historical account for Gorwaa falls into the ‘big man’ view: primarily reports of heroic individuals, battles, and migrations. While this certainly forms an important part of the Gorwaa people’s history, I hope that the archive deposit, and further data collection, will yield alternative and complementary perspectives, especially of women and non-rulers.

Oral traditions of the neighbouring Datooga people state that around 1700 the leader of the Barbaig clan, Ruida, came to the Hanang area to find other groups of Datooga living alongside farmers known as ‘Gobreik’ (Wilson 1952: 42, 45). Today, this is the Datooga word used to refer to the Gorwaa. It is argued, however (Kießling & Mous 2003: 119) that, given the time-depth, ‘Gobreik’ referred not to the Gorwaa people specifically (c.f. Thornton 1980: 199), but an earlier group of Cushitic-speakers from which the Gorwaa and Iraqw peoples (and possibly Alagwa and Burunge) derive. This is corroborated by Gorwaa oral tradition, which holds the Gorwaa, Iraqw, Alagwa, and Burunge to be born of one father [20151125j].

In one version of this story, the Gobreik live near the banks of the Ya’eér Qantsar (Green River) [20151125i]. In another, it is a place called Ma/angwe [DSC_5354_20150705b.6]. Depending on the account, changing climate or exhaustion of natural resources bred internal unrest which led to conflict between the Gobreik and the Datooga. Dealt a decisive defeat, the Ya’eér Qantsar-Ma/angwe settlement was abandoned, the leader of the Gobreik fled, and the people were scattered. Those who retreated to the high plateau between Lake Manyara and Lake Eyasi performed a rite of atonement, and were subsequently spared further battles with the Datooga. These people became the Iraqw. The people who remained on the wide lowlands did not

³ Citations consist of a recording number followed by a period followed by utterance number (segment within the ELAN .eaf file). To locate citations visit elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI1014224 and type the recording number in the top left search box. The relevant text and media files may then be downloaded for viewing.

perform atonement rites, and became the Gorwaa. There is no mention in the oral accounts I have collected of either the Alagwa or Burunge peoples.

The location of the Ya'eér Qantsar-Ma/angwe settlement remains unknown, but the site of the iron-age ruins of Engaruka is a tantalizing candidate. Archaeological evidence shows that 'sorghum was the main crop, [...] fertilized with manure from stall-fed cattle' (Sutton 2000: 2), an agricultural practice still used by the Iraqw and Gorwaa. In addition, the Engaruka community seems to have collapsed due to a 'decline in the river flows so that several of the irrigation canals could not be sustained to satisfy the demands of so intensive a system supporting so concentrated a population. [O]ne can imagine pressure on resources and unavoidable overworking, with erosion and soil-exhaustion in its train [...]' (2). Furthermore, abandonment of Engaruka seems to have been complete by around 1700, approximately the same time Ruida saw the Gobreik at Hanang. However, many oral histories of the area place the Ya'eér Qantsar-Ma/angwe settlement much further south, with alternate inhabitants of the Engaruka settlement being the precursors of the Sonjo people.

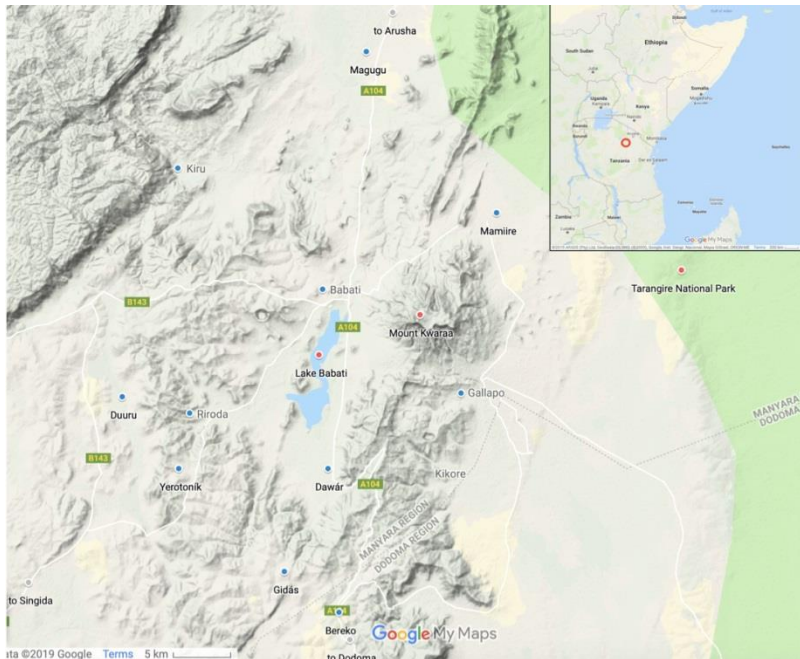


Figure 2. Map of Gorwaa land.

Base map c/o Google), additional points provided by Paschal B'uú (settlements are marked with blue circles, important landforms are marked with red, and grey circles on major highways denote road directions)

The Gorwaa went on to settle small communities in the area between Mount Hanang to the west and Mount Kwaraa to the east, but were frequently driven out in a long series of skirmishes with the Datooga. The arrival of the Maasai, another militant pastoralist group of Nilotic-speakers, put new pressures on existing ethnic groups across the region, including the Gorwaa, while also disrupting the Datooga incursions. This seemed to allow the Gorwaa to resettle communities from the east bank of the Duuru river⁴ to the far side of Mount Kwaraa. Shortly thereafter (approximately 1885), German colonial administrators (based in Kondoia) took control of the region, bringing an end to large-scale raids from the Datooga and Maasai, and allowing the area occupied by the Gorwaa to be consolidated into what is now considered Gorwaaland.

The account above potentially reduces the Gorwaa-Datooga relationship to cat-and-mouse antagonism, however the interplay of these groups is much more complex and nuanced. Lexical borrowings from Datooga into Gorwaa are common in semantic fields such as cattle diseases and plant and animal names (Kießling & Mous 2003: 33), and many place names in Gorwaaland are Datooga in origin. In fact, older speakers of Gorwaa often report that at least one of their parents spoke Datooga, or identified as a Datooga person. To this day, Datooga traditional doctors, as well as historical figures such as the Datooga prophet Saygilo Mageena, are held in high regard. As Kießling, Mous & Nurse (2008: 2) state, '[t]he Tanzanian Rift Valley is an area with a long period of contact with unstable power relations in which the directions of influence changed over time'. The Gorwaa-Datooga dynamic described above represents one moment in this long interplay.

Colonial rule (as part of German East Africa from 1885 to 1919, and as part of British Tanganyika Territory from 1922 to 1961), saw a reorganization of Gorwaa society, with the existing hereditary chiefdom given unprecedented power, serving as a proxy for the German and then the British colonial administrators. Power was placed in the chiefs' hands to collect taxes, arrest and imprison criminals and dissenters, as well as impose fines for non-compliance with large colonial projects, such as compulsory military service [20151202e]. From this arose a strict hierarchy:

- *wawutumo* 'chief'
- *ga/awusmo* 'overseer, sub-chief'
- *ya/abusmo* 'steward, ward secretary'
- *boyimo* (from English 'boy') 'village headman'⁵

⁴ Indicated most clearly on the map in Figure 2 by the village of the same name.

⁵ For a more nuanced discussion of Gorwaa political organization, see Section 7.1.3.

Particularly popular stories from this era include those relating to communal clearing of the forests across Gorwaaland to rid the region of tsetse flies, as well as open the land to agriculture [20151202d] (c.f. Fosbrooke, n.d.). It was at this time that the Gorwaa began to settle to the north as well as to the east of Mount Kwaraa.



Figure 3. Dodoód Uwo: paramount chief of the Gorwaa people (1919-1961) [20180614_FMp].

Independence from Britain in 1961 saw the creation of independent Tanganyika (renamed Tanzania upon union with Zanzibar in 1964), and abolition of the chiefdoms. From independence until the mid-1980s, the country was a socialist one-party state. During this time Gorwaaland was a remote part of the Arusha region, and the Gorwaa people continued to live traditionally as farmers and pastoralists. Villagization programmes associated with the *Ujamaa* ‘familyhood’ government policies saw Babati, a small outpost town served by a post office and a health centre [20150805], begin to grow, with a steady influx of people from across the country, bringing

practices such as rice farming to the wetter low-lying areas, especially in Magugu and Kiru.

The year 2003 marked the beginning of a period of great change in the area, as the Arusha region was divided in two, its southern half renamed Manyara, and Babati declared the regional capital. This spurred a sudden, intensive influx of development (paved roads, government offices, banks, retail businesses, etc.) as well as sizeable migration of people to the new capital, both from within the region and from outside. Increasingly, electricity is arriving in towns and villages throughout Gorwaaland, and paved roads and bridges are opening up communities to the commerce, culture, and language of the national majority. Time will tell how the Gorwaa people will respond to these recent major shifts.

3. Linguistic relationships

The following two subsections discuss the linguistic place of Gorwaa, both within its genetic context of Southern Cushitic, as well as its geographic context of the Tanzanian Rift Valley Area. This section concludes with a brief note on Gorwaa's relationship to its closest related variety, Iraqw.

3.1 Genetic classification

Gorwaa is a member of the Southern Cushitic group of the Cushitic family, a branch of the Afro-Asiatic phylum. The exact position of South Cushitic within Cushitic is a matter of some debate; Greenberg (1981: 301-302) proposed Southern Cushitic as an independent branch of Cushitic (co-equal with Northern, Eastern, and Central Cushitic), while Ehret (1995: 490) included Southern Cushitic within Eastern Cushitic. An internal classification of Southern Cushitic is presented in Table 1 (adapted from Ehret 1980a: 132).

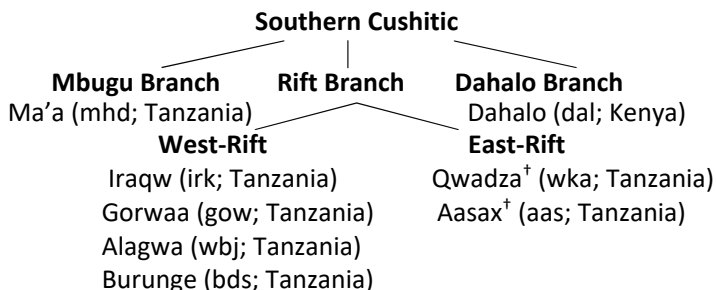


Table 1. Internal classification of Southern Cushitic

Kießling & Mous (2003: 2-3) note that classification of Southern Cushitic is a challenge for several reasons. Firstly, of the East-Rift branch, both languages are now assumed to be extinct, with only small amounts of lexical data available (see Ehret (1980a, b) for Qwadza, and Ehret (1980a), Fleming (1969), Merker (1910), Maguire (1927/1928), Petrollino & Mous (2010) and Winter (1979) for Aasax). Secondly, Ma'a of the Mbugu Branch is best described as a 'mixed language' (Mous 1994), featuring Bantu morphology and two registers: one containing Cushitic roots, and the other of Bantu origin. Because of this, inclusion of Ma'a in any genetic classification proves problematic. The status of Dahalo, whether Southern Cushitic, Eastern Cushitic (Blazek & Tosco 1994), or neither (Rowe 2000), is, ultimately, unclear. As such, Kießling & Mous (2003) focus on the internal classification of West-Rift, presented in Table 2 (adapted from Kießling & Mous 2003: 2).

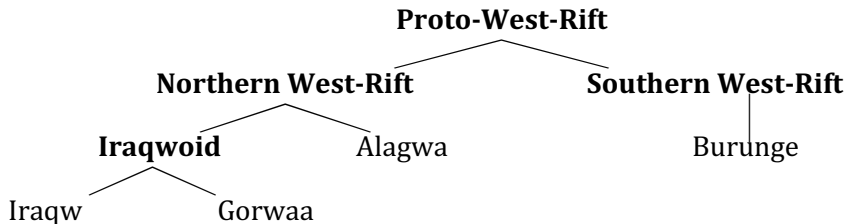


Table 2. Internal classification of West-Rift

The internal classification is useful: for example, Gorwaa and Iraqw are mutually intelligible, reflected here in the relatively late split between them. Limitations, however, do exist. Contact has played a large role in the development of all four languages, and cannot be represented graphically. For example, the nominal suffixes *-iimi*, *-aC₂ee*, and *-aC₂u* occur in both Gorwaa and Alagwa (whose language communities currently border each other), but not in Iraqw (which no longer borders Alagwa). Lexical borrowings from Alagwa into Gorwaa are also present.

3.2 Areal influences

The eastern branch of the East African Rift is unique in that it is the only area where all four major African language phyla (Afro-Asiatic, Khoisan, Niger-Congo, and Nilo-Saharan) have been in sustained contact. Convergence in parts of the grammatical structures of the languages in this region has led Kießling, Mous & Nurse (2008) to propose a Rift Valley Linguistic Area, comprised of the 13 languages shown in Table 3.

Phylum	Language (Alternate Names)	ISO 639-3	Number of Speakers (from Ethnologue)	Major Published Works
Afro-Asiatic	Iraqw (Mbulu)	[irk]	460,000	Mous (1993) Berger & Kießling (1998) Mous, Qorro & Kießling (2002)
	Gorwaa (Fiome)	[gow]	50,000	
	Alagwa (Uasi)	[wbj]	30,000	Mous (2016)
	Burunge	[bds]	30,000	Kießling (1994)
Nilo-Saharan	Datooga	[tcc]	88,000	Rottland (no date)
Niger-Congo	Nyaturu (Limi)	[rim]	801,000	Olson (1964a) Olson (1964b)
	Rangi	[lag]	410,000	Dunham (2005) Stegen (2011)
	Mbugwe (Buwe)	[mgz]	24,000	Mous (2004b)
	Nyilamba	[nim]	613,000	Johnson (1923/26)
	Isanzu (Ihaansu)	[isn]	32,400	
	Kimbu (Yanzi)	[kiv]	78,000	
Khoisan	Sandawe	[sad]	60,000	Steeaman (2012) ten Raa (2012)
Isolate	Hadza	[hts]	650	

Table 3. Languages of the Rift Valley Linguistic Area.

Today, Gorwaaland is located roughly in the geographic centre of this linguistic area, however, not all the languages presented in Table 3 are in any sort of regular contact with Gorwaa. Day-to-day contact for contemporary Gorwaa communities is largely limited to Iraqw, Rangi, Mbugwe, Alagwa, and Datooga. The languages of the wider area are presented in Figure 4 (from Kießling, Mous & Nurse 2008: 4; map by Carla Butz).

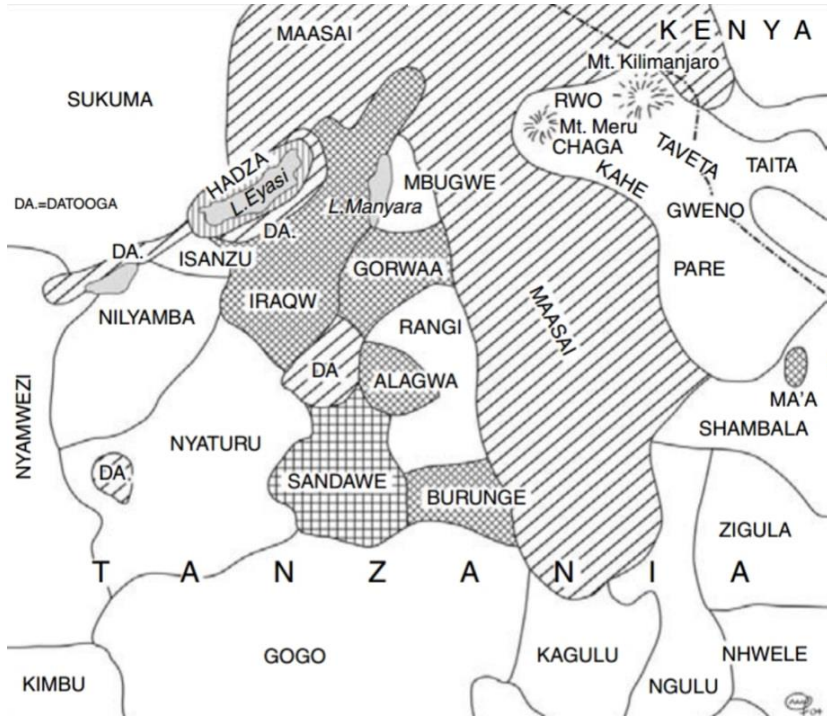


Figure 4. Languages of the Rift Valley Area.

Cultural ties and everyday contact between Gorwaa and Iraqw speakers are strong and frequent. In addition to arrivals of Iraqw farmers in the northwestern villages of Gorwaaland over the past several generations, communities along the B143 road from Babati to Katesh are, more or less, mixed Iraqw-Gorwaa. Intermarriage between the two groups is common. Gorwaa-speaking elders and traditional leaders were often observed travelling to Iraqwland in order to help resolve conflicts, and customary leaders (including chiefs, rainmakers, and traditional doctors) of both groups regularly meet to conduct major rites. Gorwaa-speaking youth mix with their Iraqw-speaking counterparts in urban areas including Babati, Mbulu, Katesh, Dareda, and further afield, Arusha, which has led to the emergence of a larger Mbulu identity, comprising both.

Similarly, contact between Gorwaa speakers and Rangi speakers is also very frequent. Communities toward the south and east of Gorwaaland, such as Bonga (also known as Dawár) and Galapoo are typically mixed Rangi-Gorwaa. Perhaps due to religious differences (the majority of Gorwaa speakers are Christian, while most Rangi speakers are Muslim), intermarriage and greater cultural integration is not as profound as for Gorwaa and Iraqw. Gorwaa and Mbugwe communities are in contact to the north of Gorwaaland, and towns

such as Magugu and Kiru are mixed, with speakers of Gorwaa and Mbugwe living and working side-by-side.

As with Rangi, though perhaps not to the same degree, Alagwa and Gorwaa communities are in contact in extreme southern communities, such as Bereko. Again, because the majority of Alagwa are Muslim, contemporary contact between Gorwaa and Alagwa communities is not as extensive as that between Gorwaa and Iraqw.

Evidence from the very recent past (perhaps only one or two generations) shows that contact between Gorwaa speakers and speakers of the various Datooga dialects was very strong. Indeed, in addition to the three Gorwaa consultants who considered themselves fluent in Datooga, at least 13 Gorwaa consultants reported that Datooga was either the first or second language of one or both of their parents. The Gorwaa still rely on Datooga traders for the metalwork bracelets worn by many Gorwaa people following marriage, as well as for soda harvested from alkaline Lake Balangida.

Within Gorwaaland itself, speakers are (and historically have been) highly mobile. Because of strict rules regarding intermarriage, it was very common for women to marry into families in villages quite distant from their own.⁶ More recently, the concentration of services in a handful of communities has resulted in high levels of movement from one area to another: secondary-level students may live in a different community from their families during term time, and expectant mothers commonly travel from rural areas to Babati in order to give birth in the larger hospitals. The recent improvements in roads and construction of bridges will only further facilitate this tendency.

Historically, Gorwaa speakers did not typically leave Gorwaaland, save for reasons related to grave illness, specialist training, or military service (see [20151202e], [20160225o]). Today, this situation is markedly different, with young men travelling all around central Tanzania for odd jobs or work tending cattle, secondary school graduates moving to Arusha, Dodoma, or Dar es Salaam for skilled employment or post-secondary education, and families settling in Arusha to take up jobs with large companies or as independent entrepreneurs. Indeed, remittances from families employed in larger urban centres are often used to help support ageing parents or younger siblings. This is a relatively new phenomenon, whose impact on the language environment of Gorwaaland has yet to be observed.

⁶ For more detail on Gorwaa marriage, see Section 7.17.

3.3 Gorwaa and Iraqw

Mutual intelligibility between Gorwaa and Iraqw is high, and though this has yet to be demonstrated in a methodologically rigorous way (e.g. cognacy judgments between lexical items, or extensive morphosyntactic comparison), I have made several recordings of Gorwaa speakers addressing Iraqw speakers with no apparent issues of comprehension [20150913a], [20150913d], [20150927a-f]. The two languages do, however, feature some considerable differences. In addition to the nominal suffixes noted above, Gorwaa also shows a different agreement pattern with several adjectives in the plural form: compare Iraqw *muukú buuxayén* ‘grey people’ with Gorwaa *muukú buuxáx*. The marker for third person agent is also different: compare Iraqw *guna diif* (‘he hit it(M)’) with Gorwaa *nguna diif*).⁷ Syntactically, Gorwaa seems to feature somewhat freer argument order than Iraqw: post-verbal nouns which index arguments, such as the Gorwaa *ina tláy gofaangw* ‘the **buck** went’, are considered either strange or ungrammatical in Iraqw.

4. Language use and attitudes

This section examines speaker numbers for Gorwaa, as well as its use and speakers’ perceptions.

4.1 Number of speakers

Estimates of the number of Gorwaa speakers vary greatly. This is largely due to the fact that no dedicated language survey has been conducted for Gorwaa, and very little was known about the linguistic makeup of communities in and around Gorwaaland. Eberhard, Simons & Fenning 2019 currently puts speaker numbers at 50,000. This figure is from Kießling’s (1999) historical reconstruction of South Cushitic, and seems to be an educated guess. Indeed, the following year, Kießling (2000: 1), revised it to 100,000 speakers. Mous (2007) estimates Gorwaa numbers at ‘about fifteen thousand speakers or less’. In comparison with the Iraqw, who are expanding and culturally dominant in the region (and whose language is the main focus of Mous 2007), Gorwaa does seem comparatively small.

⁷ An anonymous reviewer points out that both *-en* and reduplication are available as adjectival pluralisation strategies in Iraqw, but the difference lies in which specific adjectives they apply to. The same reviewer also notes that the forms *ng-* or *g-* may both be used as the marker for third person agent. This is still a difference with Gorwaa, in which only *ng-* may be used.

The first methodologically rigorous enumeration for Gorwaa speakers comes in LOT (2009), in which consultants (mainly university students who grew up in the administrative region of interest) were asked to indicate which languages (up to five) were spoken in each area (villages for rural locations and streets for urban ones) shown in the population census database (Tanzania Government 2002), as well as to estimate what percentage of people spoke which language. Project researchers then spent six weeks in all regions of the country during July-August 2006 filling gaps and assessing the validity of consultants' estimates (Muzale & Rugemalira 2008: 78-79). LOT (2009: 3) this recorded a population of 112,941 for Gorwaa.

Ward	Population	Percentage of Gorwaa speakers	Number of Gorwaa speakers
BABATI TOWN			
Babati	16,718	30%	5,015
Mutuka	4,910	60%	2,946
Nangara	7,468	30%	2,240
Singe	6,620	50%	3,310
Bonga	9,603	40%	3,841
Bagara	28,920	30%	8,676
Sigino	10,038	30%	3,011
Maisaka (Maisák)	8,831	30%	2,649
BABATI DISTRICT			
Magara	15,336	5%	767
Nkaiti	14,150	5%	708
Mwada	16,139	5%	807
Mamire	9,014	60%	5,408
Gallapo (Galapoo)	19,578	50%	9,775
Qash	19,549	50%	9,774
Ayasanda	6,182	90%	5,564
Gidas	7,392	80%	5,914
Duru	11,526	60%	6,916
Riroda	12,179	80%	9,743
Arri (/Ari)	14,146	50%	7,073
Dareda	22,880	15%	3,432
Dabil	16,781	10%	1,678
Ufana	20,189	10%	2,018
Bashnet	13,367	15%	2,005
Madunga	21,094	15%	3,164
Kiru	13,119	30%	3,936
Magugu	32,774	30%	9,832
Baoy (Bo/ay)	6,565	60%	3,939
Nar	11,186	5%	559
Endakiso	9,246	60%	5,548
OTHER AREAS			~2,500
Total:			132,748

Table 4. Estimate of Gorwaa-speaker numbers by ward

To update this, I collected population figures from the latest available census data (Tanzania Government 2014) for each ward within both Babati Town and Babati District, the area within which Gorwaaland is located, and estimated the percentage of inhabitants who speak Gorwaa. An additional 2,500 speakers have been added for places where small communities or individual families may live which are outside the survey area (e.g. Mto wa Mbu, Arusha, and Dar es Salaam).

The total yielded by this exercise is 132,748, which represents, to the best of my knowledge, the likely number of Gorwaa speakers. A more nuanced figure can be arrived at by including only those areas which I believe Gorwaa to be actively spoken and used in everyday life (shaded above), which yields a total of 79,751. These two figures suggest that, taken together, 60% of speakers are using Gorwaa actively. The remaining 40% may know Gorwaa, but are probably not using it extensively, nor passing it on to their children.

4.2 Language use

Further tentative generalizations may be reached from personal observations. Based on interactions observed among Gorwaa families, the language falls somewhere between 6b and 7 on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons 2010). EGIDS Level 6b identifies threatened language status: one in which it is not being passed onto children reliably enough for speaker numbers to remain stable over coming generations. As time goes on, ‘there will be fewer speakers or fewer domains of use or both’ (Lewis & Simons 2010: 13). EGIDS Level 7 identifies shifting language status: a situation in which the language is clearly not being passed on to younger generations.

In Babati Town, parents commonly understand Gorwaa, and may use it among themselves in the home. Children, however, either understand Gorwaa but do not use it, or may only know basic items such as greetings and how to form questions. It is rare to observe urban Gorwaa children using the language, even in the home. The language used outside the home, in virtually all interactions, is Swahili. In the absence of further, more nuanced, examination of language use in this urban setting, Gorwaa may be assessed as 7 (shifting) in Babati Town.

More rural areas (Babati District) see more robust use among all generations, even the youngest, but the domains in which Gorwaa is used are increasingly restricted. Virtually all speakers of Gorwaa also speak Swahili, which it is considerably more common to hear being spoken in social spaces (in shops, at worship, etc.). Public life is dominated by Swahili: school, healthcare, and interactions with government officials of every level is conducted in Swahili (Muzale & Rugemalira 2008). In the home and between neighbours, Gorwaa may still be heard, but, in my

impression, code-switching is ubiquitous.⁸ Rapid societal change (introduction of new farming methods and technologies, electricity, cash-based trade, mobile phones, computers, etc.) brings with it entirely new semantic domains, virtually all of which are places for talk in Swahili rather than Gorwaa. As such, though intergenerational transmission of Gorwaa is occurring in rural areas, the language is clearly losing domains, and may therefore be assessed as 6b (threatened) in Babati District.

The language of early schooling (roughly ages 5-13) in Tanzania is Swahili, with English as a taught language. Later schooling (roughly ages 14-19) is in English, with Swahili as a taught subject. Virtually no school offers provision for local languages (i.e., languages which are not Swahili or English), either as languages of instruction or taught languages.⁹ Historically, literacy (in Swahili) among Gorwaa speakers was very low, with marked improvement in the *Ujamaa* period following independence in 1961. Today, while many Gorwaa-speaking children do attend school, education may be disrupted or not completed, depending on the family economic fortunes. Illiteracy among young adults is not uncommon; if people are literate it will be in Swahili, and possibly English. A more detailed discussion on education and its effect on the Gorwaa language is provided in Section 7.3.

In 1977, an Iraqw translation of the Christian Old Testament was produced by the Tanzania Bible Society using a writing system developed principally by the Catholic mission at Tlawi. As an appendix, a glossary of Gorwaa terms was included to make the book useable by the Gorwaa speaking Christian community as well. Neither the book nor Gorwaa-language worship became particularly widespread, but it did establish the Iraqw orthography as the standard for Gorwaa as well. However, instances of Gorwaa writing are rare, and show a great variety of non-standard spellings (e.g. [20150815m], [20150920n], [20151001z], [20151127g], and [20151127h]).

⁸ Though very common in most speech situations, code-switching is relatively rare in the corpus (though see [20151025], and [20150811c-f]). This might be explained by the fact that people who were recorded knew that the research was being conducted on the Gorwaa language and were therefore conscious to ensure they were speaking only in Gorwaa, and not Swahili.

⁹ An anonymous reviewer adds that the teachers they have met are convinced that they are forbidden by law to use other languages. Though this is not strictly the case, it is in line with what Muzale & Rugemalira (2008) refer to as the hostile political environment in which local languages currently exist. For more information, see Section 7.15.

4.3 Language attitudes

As with language use, no dedicated survey of language attitudes has been undertaken for Gorwaa, and therefore the generalizations made here are tentative. Overall, there appears to be a rather sharp divide in language attitudes, particularly in terms of age, as well as identification with rural versus urban ways of life. Typically, older Gorwaa speakers from rural areas tend to be most enthusiastic about their language, seeing it as useful in the widest range of domains, and valuable as a badge of a culture with which they strongly identify. Younger Gorwaa in more urban areas tend to view it as being less useful in day-to-day life, and, in some cases, tend to be somewhat embarrassed to be heard speaking Gorwaa, especially when non-Gorwaa are present. A large proportion of younger speakers have gone so far as to eliminate the concept of Gorwaa altogether, in favour of the exonym 'Mbulu'. Mbulu, the name of the largest Iraqw settlement, has recently emerged to subsume both Iraqw and Gorwaa peoples, cultures, and languages, and is perhaps the most common way for both groups of youth to refer to themselves. Resultantly, many young Gorwaa speakers typically refer to themselves as of Mbulu ethnicity, and to the language which they speak as Mbulu or Kimbulu. Superficially, this simply represents the adoption of a new nomenclature, as the language which speakers use remains the same. In the longer-term this perhaps represents a larger shift to Iraqw, as the Gorwaa are most certainly the minority within this neo-ethnicity.

There has been considerable interest from Gorwaa speakers of all ages in the work surrounding the current Gorwaa language documentation, with the contribution of some (considerably elderly) consultants resulting in a large body of data (such as songs, traditional justice, and uncommon or archaic vocabulary) being collected in a relatively short period of time. Younger speakers directly involved in the translation and transcription of the material have become researchers in their own right, and are taking increasing ownership of the project, and ultimately the documentation and description of their own culture. Such energy would seem to suggest that those exposed to the full richness of the language tend to approach it with new esteem, and may be a route to explore should the speaker community desire to further valorize Gorwaa.

5. Language name

The earliest references to the Gorwaa in Western literature come from German explorers (Seidel 1900; Obst 1913; Reche 1914; Heepe 1930), in which the people and language were both referred to as Fiome, Fiomu, or Ufiomi. This seems to be derived from one of the names given to the volcanic mountain to the immediate east of Babati town, today known as Mount

Kwaraa. Indeed, the area of government-protected forest atop Mount Kwaraa is today named Ufiome Nature Reserve. Some speakers refer to themselves as Fiomu (or the Swahilized *Mfiomu* or *Wafiomu* for ‘Fiomu person’ and ‘Fiomu people’, respectively), and their language as Fiomu (or the Swahilized *Kifiomu* ‘Fiomu language’), but this is not particularly widespread. This is interesting, however, in that it establishes this area as somehow salient to identifying the Gorwaa people and their land. This is perhaps unsurprising, in that Mount Kwaraa is an imposing free-standing mountain, the highest within Gorwaaland, and visible for kilometres in any direction.

More common is the glottonym and ethnonym Gorwaa. Reconstructed as **goburaa* for West Rift, Kießling & Mous (2003: 119) suggest that it was the name used to refer to the ‘ethnic group closely related or part of [Proto-West-Rift], [Proto-North-West-Rift], or [Proto-Iraqwoid] community’. In many ways the most ‘archaic continuation of [Proto-Iraqwoid]’ (Kießling & Mous 2003: 33), it is not surprising that Gorwaa would be the glottonym and ethnonym most similar to the proto-group. In early academic work conducted by British colonialists (e.g. Bagshawe 1925; Whiteley 1958), and much work since (e.g. Wada 1984), this (or variants, including Gorowa and Goroa) is the name used to refer to both the people and language. The Gorwaa themselves employ the ethnonyms *Gorwaa* ‘Gorwaa people’, *Gormo* ‘Gorwaa man’, and *Gorto’o* ‘Gorwaa woman’. The language is known as *tsifrír Gorwaa* ‘language of the Gorwaa people’, or, slightly less commonly, *Gorti’i* ‘Gorwaa language’. Swahili renders these forms as *Mgorowa* ‘Gorwaa person’, *Wagorowa* ‘Gorwaa people’, and *Kigorowa* ‘Gorwaa language’.

As noted in Section 4.3 above, the term *Mbulu* is gaining in popularity, especially among urban youth, and is an outward sign of a newly-emerging identity, designed to serve as a cover-term for ‘speaker of a Cushitic language’ or ‘person of Cushitic origin’. It is particularly useful in new multiethnic centres, such as Arusha. We can compare *Mchaga* as a cover term for a speaker of the various, very different Chaga dialects, and *Mang’ati* for a speaker of one of the Datooga dialects. Thus, speakers of Kirombo or Kimoshi are subsumed under *Kichaga* (spoken by an *Mchaga*), and speakers of Barbaig or Tsimajega are subsumed under *Kimang’ati* (spoken by a *Mang’ati*). So too are speakers of Gorwaa subsumed under *Kimbulu* (spoken by an *Mbulu*). Whether this term becomes widely adopted, and whether it eventually replaces *Gorwaa* altogether, will depend on future attitudes of speakers themselves.

6. Existing literature

Seidel (1910) is the first reference to the Gorwaa language in Western literature. Following this, the most significant work is Heepe (1930), a transcription and translation of a Gorwaa folk tale. Further linguistic work has

either treated Gorwaa as part of a larger comparison of South Cushitic (Kießling 1999; Kießling & Mous 2003), or has remained unpublished (Maghway 2009; Nahhato, Margwee, and Kießling 1994). A list may be found on the Gorwaa Glottolog page.

7. Culture and society

The following subsections each treat a facet of Gorwaa life, offering an account of traditional systems as well as contemporary ones (both of which may exist simultaneously), with special attention to impacts on language use. Each subsection concludes with a brief comment on linguistic genres associated with these aspects of culture and society, as well as some examples available in the archive deposit. It should be noted that most of these genres represent more traditional aspects of Gorwaa culture. This is not because Gorwaa lacks any interesting contemporary genres (indeed, Gorwaa text-speak and game-playing language (including pool and cards), are, for example, both contemporary genres worthy of further attention), but because traditional genres have been a major focus of the data collection. Additionally, it would seem that these genres are often those under the greatest threat of obsolescence, and by being highlighted here, it is hoped that other scholars may one day give them some examination.

7.1 Natural resources and faith – traditional patterns

As primarily agro-pastoralist people, Gorwaa livelihoods rely heavily on the land for both crop production, as well as grazing of zebu cattle, goats, and sheep. Forests are also essential for providing food, fuel, building materials, and medicine. According to traditional Gorwaa belief, the natural world is imbued with a certain sanctity, around which have grown indigenous land management practices and institutions inspired by myth (c.f. Arhem et al. 2004, on the Piraparaná, Colombia).

Historically (Maganga 1995: 105-118), all land in Gorwaaland was held by the *wawutumo* ‘paramount chief’, and tenure of arable land was based on membership in the traditional community and occupancy on the land to be used. Absentee landlordism was therefore disallowed. Grazing land was mainly designated as a community common, as were forests (subject to significant restrictions to be mentioned below).

Traditional resource management is perhaps best illustrated in the practices and institutions inspired by indigenous myth. Maganga (1995: 131-132) notes that Gorwaa rituals and social gatherings often take place in forests and sacred groves carefully preserved for these purposes, that large trees (especially *ficus*) are protected as dwellings of rain-bringing spirits, and that ‘land blessing

ceremonies under which various unsustainable land use practice[s] were prohibited were part and parcel of the traditional Gorowa religion' (Maganga 1995: 132). This is evident in recordings such as [20151126c] in which Aakó Manangu Qamsillo describes the sacred /*aantsimó* fig tree, and [20151223b] in which Aakó Bu'ú Saqwaré and Paschal Bu'ú discuss the history of the *qalalandí* tree at the centre of Yerotoni village.

7.2 Natural resources and faith – contemporary patterns

Today, most Gorwaa people practice either some form of Christianity or, to a lesser extent, Sunni Islam, with these introduced religions being seen as symbols of modernity and self-improvement. Communities are strongly based around religion, with young people encouraged to socialize and marry within their faith community, and traditionalists are often labeled pagans or infidels. Maganga (1995:132) notes that the adoption of Christianity and Islam threaten to undermine the indigenous spiritually-inspired resource management system, as there is a danger that 'many of the resource conservation norms and practices may be dismissed as merely traditional superstitions'.

Economic changes (see also Sections 7.5-7.8 below) have also resulted in the expansion of farming and of farmland, often at the expense of community pastures and forest. Fruit, building materials, and medicine traditionally sourced from local forests is increasingly being replaced by modern produce from the market, building materials from hardware stores, and pharmaceuticals from chemists. Indeed, perhaps the most common uses for forests has now become extensive cutting of trees for building material and charcoal.

Waves of immigration (first represented by European settlers in the 1940s and continuing today with groups from land-scarce regions such as Kilimanjaro) and land expropriation (such as that conducted for the establishment of Tarangire National Park in 1969) has resulted in traditional land allocation norms being upended, especially with regard to ownership. Maganga (1995: 115) notes that buying land has now become normal, with the majority of purchasers not indigenous to the Gorwaa-speaking area.

This social atomization of the Gorwaa language community, by a plurality of new faith systems as well as land dispossession, is mirrored in a very literal sense by the physical atomization caused by soil erosion. Both population pressure and a decline in adherence to traditional resource management practices has resulted in continuous cultivation of arable land, overgrazing, and a rapid increase in cutting trees. Maganga (1995:125) notes the formation of gullies (*we/eeri*) in Nangara village carrying precious soil away and into Lake Babati. This phenomenon is widespread throughout the Gorwaa-speaking area: *we/eeri* are described in [20150722f], and [20150810c]. These gullies have grown rapidly, Ayi Raheli Lawi told me that the *Wa/aángw Endabeg*, over ten meters deep, and as wide in places, was formed in her lifetime.

7.3 Natural resources and faith – linguistic ramifications

Replacement of ethnically-based land ownership with a land-for-purchase model has, over the past century, introduced a plethora of new languages to the area. Landowners may become lucrative employers (I have worked with at least one consultant who learned Somali on the farm of a Somali immigrant family). More commonly, however, newly-purchased land will become the home of families from land-scarce regions who often use their ethnic language at home, and Swahili with their Gorwaa neighbours. Many neighbourhood-level interactions will therefore be conducted in Swahili rather than Gorwaa. And though the concept of ‘indigeneity’ must be interpreted in a more nuanced way in Gorwaaland, and, indeed, across much of East Africa (c.f. Brenzinger 2007: 192), Nettle & Romaine’s (2000) identification of loss of indigenous land as a major cause of loss of indigenous languages is certainly applicable here.

Furthermore, environmental changes, perhaps most saliently embodied by the formation of gullies, have not only reduced the agricultural potential of wide swathes of Gorwaaland, but have also split communities, resulting in a situation where regular contact between one-time neighbors is impossible, particularly for the elderly. Given that elders held (and still hold) an important place in Gorwaa society as arbiters, teachers, and knowledge-holders, this type of extreme erosion will most certainly have cultural and linguistic impacts.

7.4 Natural resources and faith – associated linguistic genres

Associated with traditional Gorwaa faith is the *firoo*: a litany-like pronouncement, usually asking for the intercession of the indigenous god *Loo’aa*. Typically, one speaker stands facing a crowd, speaking in quick utterances, to which the crowd responds. The back-and-forth exchange characteristically follows a certain rhythm, building to a climax in which the speaker throws up his arms, and the crowd responds emphatically. The contents of the *firoo* seem relatively variable, and I have yet to observe the more formulaic *slufay* as described for Iraqw (Wada 1978, Kamera 1987/1988, Beck and Mous 2014). Examples of the *firoo* are [20151024c], [20160123h], [20160301h], and [20160301i].

Much modern religion is conducted in languages other than Gorwaa (Arabic in the case of Islam, and Swahili for the various interpretations of Christianity), but several churches do occasionally employ Gorwaa during services, and several recordings have been made of Gorwaa-language sermons. Similar to the traditional *firoo*, this genre also features one speaker standing before a crowd, but is not characterized by a rhythmic interchange. Typically, sermons are long monologues recounting stories or conveying

teachings from the Bible. Many of the sermons recorded are notable for the use of code-switching between Gorwaa and Swahili. Several examples of this genre are [20150726a], [20150913a], and [20150927a] to [20150927f].

Tasked with maintaining at least fifty (Gerden & Mtallo 1990) ceremonial forests, the secret brotherhood of the Maanda make a site sacred by hiding a musical instrument there.¹⁰ Members of this brotherhood regularly meet in these forests at night and play music. Characterized by call-and-response singing and lively (and often cryptic) lyrics about people or historical events, the music is usually accompanied by horns and drums. Maanda songs are difficult to record in their ethnographic context due to the secret nature of these gatherings, but members of the brotherhood freely sing such songs at other occasions or on their own. Examples include [20151004a], [20160927c], and [20161011f].

7.5 Economy – traditional patterns

The agricultural-pastoralist economy of the Gorwaa people is tied inextricably to the local cycle of monsoon rains (see Table 5 below, inspired by a similar diagram developed for the Ihanzu people by Sanders 2008: 59). Farming is typically done collectively by groups of young men, while compensation, in the form of sorghum beer and meat, is prepared by the women of the household. Young boys would also often tend livestock collectively, especially if they had to be brought any large distance from home. Most major ritual processes, such as house-building and initiation rites, are carried out in the dry season.

¹⁰ The term *Maanda* literally means ‘people of Bantu origin’ in Gorwaa. Hence, *Maandá Da/áw* ‘Bantu people of the east’ is, for example, the name for the Mbugwe people. Members of the *Maanda* brotherhood (sometimes referred to as *Maandá baahaa*, or ‘Bantu of the hyaenas’) claim no Bantu ancestry (indeed, membership is open to virtually all Gorwaa men who have been properly initiated into adulthood). Further, the brotherhood is not a secret one in terms of membership (*Maanda* are known in the communities), nor, particularly in business (most community members know about *Maanda* rituals). However, many of these rituals themselves are secret, with only *Maanda* eligible to attend. Interlopers and spies to these rituals (especially the playing of the hidden instruments) are subjected to corporal punishment, or heavy fines.

Month	Weather	Food Supply	Activities		
			Farming	Livestock	Other
November <i>Axwarir</i> <i>Tlaakw</i>	hot, moderate rain	grain supplies diminishing, dried wild greens are eaten	clearing the fields, burning leftover waste	household fodder exhausted, cattle may be grazed far away	dances, rituals to receive the new year
December <i>Axwarir</i> <i>Hhoo'</i>	hot, heavy rain	grain supplies diminishing, dried wild greens are eaten	sowing sorghum and maize	household fodder exhausted	0
January <i>Talaali</i>	hot, moderate rain	lean month (grain supplies very low), meat used to feed parties of communal farmers	the first hoeing	household fodder exhausted	preparation of beer for parties of communal farmers
February <i>Gwari/i</i>	hot, moderate rain	lean month (grain supplies very low), wild greens ripen	0	fresh grass available, cattle may be grazed closer to home	0
March <i>Doomú</i> <i>Boó/</i>	hot, first of the heavy rain	lean month (grain supplies very low), wild greens abundant	the second hoeing	fresh grass plentiful, cattle may be grazed close to home	rituals for favourable rains
April <i>Doomú</i> <i>/Awaákw</i>	cooling off, heavy rain	first fresh maize is ready, leafy green vegetables abundant, small birds caught in fields	guarding the fields from birds and animals; small harvest (maize)	fresh grass plentiful	rituals for favourable rains

Table 5. Part 1: Calendar of seasonal activities

Month	Weather	Food Supply	Activities		
			Farming	Livestock	Other
May <i>Qu'a</i>	cold, moderate rain	maize and sorghum abundant	harvesting and threshing maize	fresh grass plentiful	games
June <i>Tsaxutumó</i>	very cold, dry	maize and sorghum abundant	major harvest (sorghum)	dried cornstalks plentiful, cattle may be fed at home or in a harvested field, cattle are branded this month	games
July <i>Hháy</i> <i>Tlehheemu</i>	cold, dry	maize and sorghum abundant	threshing sorghum	fodder plentiful	house building
August <i>Damár</i> <i>/Awaakw</i>	warming up, dry	maize and sorghum abundant	0	fodder plentiful	end of farming season rituals, including beer parties, house building
September <i>Qadáy</i> <i>Geera</i>	hot, dry	grain supplies diminishing	0	fodder diminishing, cattle may be fed from cut tree leaves	beer parties, house building
October <i>Qadáy</i> <i>Alhe'esay</i>	hot, first rain showers	grain supplies diminishing, dried wild greens are eaten	clearing fields for new crop	fodder diminishing, cattle may be fed from cut tree leaves	dances, initiation rites

Table 5. Part 2: Calendar of seasonal activities

7.6 Economy – contemporary patterns

Because of issues related to land rights and usage, the wide-open commons for cattle grazing that once existed throughout the region have largely disappeared, and consequently farming now forms the major livelihood of the Gorwaa people (as it does for the majority of Tanzanians). Today, greater integration into the national road network means that food and grain are available for purchase in central markets at any time of year, and that famine, while still a local phenomenon, does not often result in the death that it once did. Agricultural advances have seen fields cultivated with greater intensity and higher yields than in the past, though this has not come for free: exhaustion of soil is common, monocultures of mainly maize now greatly exceed sorghum, and farmers often encroach on each others' land or on land meant as forest reserves. Capitalism has also changed the way that the outputs of farming are viewed: large volumes of a household's grain is now sold for cash instead of being food and a basis of strengthening social ties within a community (sorghum beer is, after all, the basis of most every Gorwaa ritual). Arguably, this has made it easier to purchase commodities such as school supplies and medicine (as well as handbags and mobile phones), but it has also meant that the products of farming have been diluted of their social and cultural meaning (c.f. Rekdal 1996).

7.7 Economy – linguistic ramifications

The widespread switch from sorghum to maize cultivation has resulted in the disappearance of a whole series of cultural occasions; indeed, some of the most important social gatherings of the year were based on the precise stages during the ripening and harvest of the first sorghum. In addition to the songs, dances, specialized clothing, and instruments, which are being steadily forgotten, Gorwaa speakers have lost an opportunity to come together as a community, to socialize, and, as one speaker put it to me, 'be Gorwaa'.

Linguistically, this not only represents a loss of a whole field of vocabulary (local species of sorghum, names of specific items used in sorghum harvest rituals, etc.), but also an entire linguistic domain. To be clear, it is not that the language of the Gorwaa harvest rituals is switching to Swahili, but that the entire Gorwaa harvest ritual is itself becoming obsolete. This itself is not a threat to the language, as cultures and cultural practices do change. However, without any viable Gorwaa-language innovations to replace it, the language becomes increasingly restricted in its range of uses.



Figure 5. Species of traditional sorghum. (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey

Clockwise, from top left: *uruundumi* [20161122v], *maangwere'* [20161122x], *da/ateni* [20161122z], and *kolongesi* [20161122zb]

7.8 Economy – associated linguistic genres

An essential part of communal farming is the role of the *heelusumo*: the singer who provides the work party with music to cultivate by. In the fields, the party of cultivators stands in a line and moves forward in time with the beat of the *heelusumo*'s song, swinging their hoes in unison. The *heeloo* is often a long song with a very clearly-defined beat, and often includes motifs of farming or

working the land. Functionally, the songs' hypnotic qualities seem to dull the party to the strain of the task at hand. Examples include [20150903f], [20151125b], and [20160213b].

Blessing the first crop is commonly practiced by Christians, where an offering of the first of any crop is brought to the local pastor's house as a gift. The crop-blessing genre is marked by the pastor praying over the food in the presence of the person who brought the offering, and is characterized, as in many types of Christian prayer, by the speaker directly addressing God. Examples include [20150717a], and [20150804b].

7.9 Education – traditional patterns

Traditional Gorwaa society sees adults as not simply progenitors of children, but as their foremost teachers. Indeed, the discipline, protection, and guidance of Gorwaa children was seen as a shared responsibility among neighbours, as well as the larger community. Much education, however, may be divided into two principal spheres: one defined by kinship, and one defined by age-set. Each of these will be briefly described below.

As set out in Section 7.17 below, the primary unit of Gorwaa kinship is the extended family, with sustained, close contact maintained between a child and their patriline. Indeed, a man's sons and daughters were not only those born to him, but those born to his brothers as well. A child refers to their cousins as 'brothers' or 'sisters'. Throughout the day, children are expected to take part in activities defined by their age, physical strength, and gender. Young boys may tend cattle with their brothers and cousins, girls may collect firewood or cook and prepare food with their mother, aunts, or grandmother. Local sciences (botanical knowledge, food hygiene, etc.) and important social skills (greeting elders, visiting traditional doctors) would be learned through observing one's older kin. Nighttime, following the evening meal, was often a time for *sinika*: combinations of narrative songs and riddles, often aimed at sharpening one's language skills or teaching a moral.

In addition to education based within the family, traditional education was also delivered in age-sets. Interviews with older members of the Gorwaa community suggest that society featured a progressive age-set system, into which young men and (notably) young women were initiated upon reaching puberty. Both male and female initiation rites involved group circumcision (undergone (non-ceremonially) today only by males, and usually in hospitals), periods spent together in the forest, as well as a series of secret teachings bestowed on initiates by older men or women, respectively. Much of this system is now defunct, but many recordings intimate that this education dealt with sex, marriage, and domestic responsibilities. Successful initiates would pass into the ranks of a junior generational age-set, of which perhaps two to

three would exist at any time. A list of age-set names (many semantically opaque), arranged from what is estimated to be the oldest to the newest, is:

(2) GORWAA AGE-SET NAMES

Baamút

Sarwaat

Lagen

Baashumt

Mayangalda

Ireqwaán

Saanqurda

Duuyeeet

Baashumtó Hayaa hayaa ‘feathers’:

supposedly given to this age-set because of their predilection for dancing while wearing feathers

Hibileét hibíl ‘unadorned’:

given to this age-set because of their common renunciation of wearing traditional clothing and beads

It should be noted that the vast majority of these words appear to be Datooga in origin. *Hibileét* is the only age-set with living members, all of whom are very old indeed.

7.10 Education – contemporary patterns

Today, it is widely accepted that the locus for a child’s education is the Tanzanian national government, primarily through formal schooling. As mentioned in Section 4.2, this entails seven years of primary school for 7 to 13-year-olds, and four years of secondary school for 14 to 17-year-olds.¹ This formal education bears no resemblance to traditional forms of education both in terms of structure (rote learning in classrooms, rather than participatory learning within the community), as well as substance (Western subjects such as mathematics, science, English, French, and (Tanzanian national) history, rather than locally-meaningful competencies such as local agricultural sciences, animal husbandry, sustainable resource management (see Section

¹ Additionally, two years of pre-primary education for 5 to 6-year-olds is optionally available, as well as two years of advanced-level secondary education for 18 to 19-year-olds, provided they have sufficient grades and wish to continue on to University-level study.

7.1 above), (local, ethnic) history, as well as larger roles and expectations in society). Both boys and girls typically share the classroom, so gender-specific education (and, therefore, gender-specific access to certain types of knowledge) is eliminated.

7.11 Education – linguistic ramifications

Linguistically, primary school students are taught exclusively in Swahili, followed by a switch at secondary school, where the language of instruction becomes English, and Swahili is continued as a taught subject. Crucially, local languages are effectively banned in the classroom (Muzale & Rugemalira 2008: 69), meaning that students can be (and often are) punished or demeaned for using Gorwaa at school.

In addition to this, though tuition fees for both primary and secondary schooling have been eliminated in recent years, families are still expected to cover a variety of costs, including school supplies and school uniforms. Secondary schools are typically larger and more centralized than primary schools, obliging large numbers of secondary-age children to board at the school during term-time, or to live in nearby informal housing and hostels. Personal observation has shown that the cost of meeting a school's associated requirements (uniforms, hostel fees, meals, bedding, etc.) is commonly a household's primary financial burden, forcing many families into long hours of work, taking away from time spent nurturing children. Socially, secondary students in boarding may get the opportunity to reconnect with their families by returning home for a day on weekends, but a great many must simply remain separated from their homes for weeks.

7.12 Education – associated linguistic genres

As mentioned above, the times following the evening meal and before sleep are often used by parents to give children lessons. The first of these is the *alki/it*, literally 'returning together'; *alki/it* are stories, usually fantastic, and typically featuring talking animals, monsters, or people with unusual abilities. As a genre, *alki/it* are highly performative, and are generally told by one adult in front of a group of children, and feature long periods of monologue (though sometimes the audience is encouraged to join in with occasional questions being posed or invitations given to help produce sounds or refrain-like phrases), dramatic characterization of speakers, and often frequent use of ideophones. Examples include [20160126b], [20160213i], and [20160213s].

A further pedagogical genre is *sinika* songs. These call-and-response songs involve a parent leading and children responding with a set chorus. These songs are often longer than others, contain words that are more easily

understandable, and form a story. Examples include [20160203g], and [20161011k].

The term *sinika* may also refer to riddles. Based on guessing the identity of a figurative description, the teller will pose the riddle, and others will hazard a guess. If nobody guesses correctly, the riddle either goes unanswered, or may be ‘bought’ from the teller by offering a village, town, or city (I once observed a particularly good riddle exchanged for all of Canada).

- (3) *Sinik!*
My calabash is small,
It has two mouths,
And has much oil that never runs out.
 [Answer: the nose] [20130206b_20150720b.3-7]

Sinika riddles are formulaic in the way that they begin (the teller always exclaims *sinik!*), and how the listeners respond, both in attempting to answer, and in bargaining for an answer to be given. As mentioned above, the language is highly figurative, and makes frequent use of ideophones. Examples include [20150916s], [20150924g], and [20151120c].

7.13 Societal and political organization – traditional patterns

In accounts of Gorwaa history and culture, much emphasis is given to the role of the *wawutumo*: the paramount chief of the Gorwaa people and political leader up until the independence of Tanganyika and abolition of the chiefdoms in 1961. This is to be expected because the *wawutumo* is the most salient symbol of administrative power, and the majority of those people identified as holders of Gorwaa history are men. However, traditional political organization is considerably more nuanced than this, and deserves its own dedicated inquiry. What follows is an attempt to broaden the view of traditional Gorwaa political organization, beyond the *wawutumo*, *ga/awusmo*, *ya/abusmo*, and *boyimo* presented in Section 2 above.

Of all the temporal and ritual power that the *wawutumo* possesses, rain, the most precious resource, is controlled by the rainmakers. The rainmakers are descended from *Alitoo Yaambi*, who himself fled from either Ihanzuland or Nyilambaland, was given refuge by the Gorwaa leader at the time, and whose descendants subsequently became Gorwaa in both language and identity. They are each responsible for rain in a specific part of Gorwaaland, and the rituals they perform are essential to the health of the livestock and the harvest (and therefore the economy) of all the communities within that area. Because it is the *wawutumo* who acts as the sole intermediary between the Gorwaa people and the rainmakers, rain plays a complex and dynamic role in the political economy and history of an area: lack of rain may indicate a power-struggle between the *wawutumo* and one of the local rainmakers, or sudden

rains following a delay in the rainy season may result from the *wawutumo* applying pressure on a wayward rainmaker. Indeed, the house of *Yaambi* and rainmaking are one of the most resilient institutions to persist to this day.

Save for these roles, the majority of other political responsibilities, both ritual and everyday, are typically filled by *barisee* ‘community elders’. The *barisee* are usually men, but occasionally also women, and represent the accumulated wisdom of the society. They are therefore called upon, among other acts, to provide counsel for the *wawutumo*, lead rituals of purification, and serve as arbiters for most transgressions or crimes.

7.14 Societal and political organization – contemporary patterns

Tanzania has been a multiparty democracy since 1992, and has operated within a largely free-market economy since reforms in the mid-1980s. However, many Tanzanians will have lived through long periods of single-party governance for most of the years following independence, and at least in Gorwaaland, still live as small holding farmers. Very few Gorwaa-speaking people are employed in the modern government bureaucracy, based in Babati.

Administratively, the majority of Gorwaa-speakers are located within some 96 villages of Babati District, each of which has an elected council and chairman. Villages are further subdivided into smaller neighbourhood authorities called *vitongoji*. Day-to-day decisions, including provision of common facilities such as cattle dips, grain stores, and wells and tanks for water, are handled at the village-level.

Conflict-resolution is also carried out at the village-level, but modern administrative models blur with traditional ones: very often, local officials, and even local courts, will send cases to local village elders for resolution: pastors, imams, and the very same *barisee* mentioned in Section 7.13 are the individuals most often responsible for conflict-resolution among the Gorwaa today.

7.15 Societal and political organization – linguistic ramifications

The political history of the Gorwaa people can, since the first colonial encounter, be described as gradually ceding administrative power to larger institutions: colonial regimes, eventually succeeded by the current national government. Linguistically, this is important because none of these larger powers has ever accepted Gorwaa as a legitimate language of government, instead, opting for colonial languages such as German or English, or, increasingly, the lingua franca, Swahili. Muzale & Rugemalira (2008: 69) point out that currently languages like Gorwaa ‘exist in a hostile political environment’, their almost comprehensive ban in public life allowing the

central government to ‘maintain a strong grip on the lives of the people and limit the space for divergent ideas’. State support for the Gorwaa language is entirely absent, and Gorwaa-language activism could very easily be construed as an attempt to subvert national unity.

However, several local institutions, especially the rainmakers and the elders, remain strong centres of Gorwaa-language use, and could be viewed as particularly important (and visible) symbols of Gorwaa as a viable language of governance and administration.

7.16 Societal and political organization – associated linguistic genres

The Gorwaa have a rich speech register comprising vocabulary of jural terms, especially for types of fines, methods of repayment, and rituals to atone for crimes and misdemeanors. Examples include [20160219f], [20160301k], and [20161113e].

7.17 Kinship and marriage – traditional patterns

The Gorwaa are patrilineal and patrilocal, that is, property and ancestral identity are inherited through the father’s lineage, and upon marriage, a couple take up residence at or near the husband’s father’s home. Basic kinship terms appear in Figure 8 and Figure 9.^{2,3}

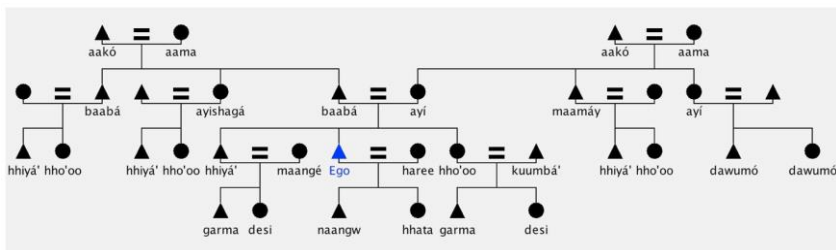


Figure 6. Gorwaa kinship terms (mainly consanguineal): self (ego) is male, (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey.

² Kinship charts developed using the SILKin software programme (software .sil.org/silkin/)

³ Note especially here that the terms for spouse, as well as spouse of a sibling differ according to the sex of *ego*.

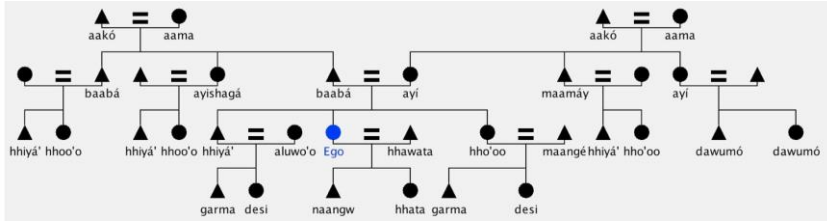


Figure 7. Gorwaa kinship terms (mainly consanguineal): self (ego) is Female, (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey.

Many Gorwaa marriages are arranged with the help of parents and other relatives, though quicker marriages inspired by love are neither uncommon nor seen as less appropriate. What is essential is that, before a betrothal proceeds, the appropriate experts are consulted in order to ensure that the prospective couple may, indeed, be wed. This has mainly to do with not marrying individuals too closely related to each other, and much time is spent on determining lineage and family history.

Following this procedure is a sequence of events which deserve much closer research than I have hitherto been able to do. The first major step is the payment of a bride price from the family of the groom to the family of the bride. This is principally a number of cattle, but other small livestock including goats and sheep also play an important role. The payment is not simply of monetary value, and certain animals pass to specific relatives outside of the bride's immediate family. The next step is the wedding ceremony itself: a highly ritualized and symbolic affair with a strict protocol. A third step (and the last which I am confident enough to mention here) is the giving of gifts: again, this is a highly ritualized affair, with family members each promising gifts to the newlywed couple; the approval or rejection of these gifts by the newlywed bride is signaled by the acceptance or refusal of specially-cooked food.

And thus the new couple is integrated into new family units, each with new sets of obligations, both to each other, and to each other's in-laws. This is particularly true for the newlywed woman, who has not only moved to her father-in-law's household, but who may also have taken on a new name, discarding her childhood given name for a new wedded name. Respect and deference to a woman's in-laws is required, and early inquiry shows that a taboo existed against a woman referring to her father-in-law by name.⁴ Terms for in-laws are provided in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

⁴ Other cases of father-in-law name-avoidance in Tanzania have been documented for Datooga (Mitchell 2015), as well as Nyamwezi (Schönenberger 1995: 112).

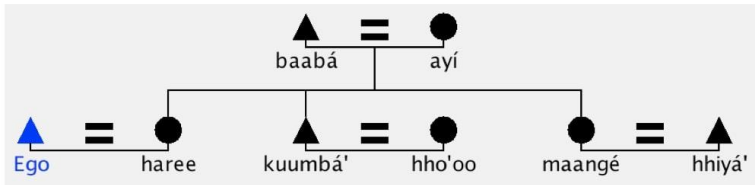


Figure 8. Gorwaa (affinal) kinship terms, self (ego) is male, (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey

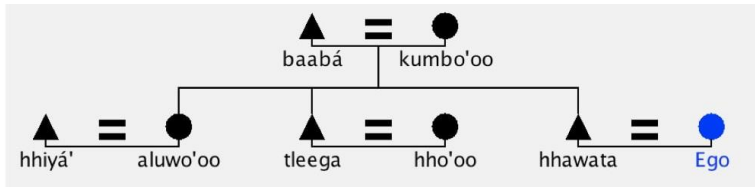


Figure 9. Gorwaa (affinal) kinship terms, self (ego) is female, (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey.

Finally, in addition to extended family, the Gorwaa also recognize a number of clans, each of which is based in either real or perceived common ancestry. Several clans are associated with a particular function in society (e.g. the clan *Harna'aa* is that of the paramount chief, and the clan *Haryaambi* is that of the rainmakers). Many others dictate aspects of a person's daily life: certain clans were required to build their houses with the cooking fire on the right-hand side, whereas others have it on the left. The *Qooloo* clan was not allowed to eat greens made with the vegetable *qooli*. In a restriction which resembles those on natural resources (see Section 7.1), many clans were sanctioned from using certain species of trees, either in building their homes, or as fuel. Members of the clan *Harna'aa* would be met with misfortune if they owned cattle with a brindled coat.

7.18 Kinship and marriage – contemporary patterns

Changes to land ownership and increased movement of individuals both inside and outside of Gorwaaland has led to many families not living on or even near their hereditary property. The structure of families is also considerably more diverse, especially in terms of single-parent families, due to what seem to be higher levels of divorce or separation than in the past. Mixed-marriages of Gorwaa-speaking people and non-Gorwaa-speaking people are also quite common.

Whether Christian, Muslim, or traditionalist, Western-style weddings now represent the overall fashion, complete with dresses, cake, and large sound systems. Such events are attended by large numbers of invitees and virtually anyone in the larger village within walking distance, making them major

social occasions. Versions of Gorwaa dances are sometimes performed at these events, but the predominant cultural atmosphere (demonstrated by the food, the gifts given, and the language used) is that of the mainstream Tanzanian majority.

7.19 Kinship and marriage – linguistic ramifications

A repeated comment is that mixed marriages of Gorwaa-speaking people and non-Gorwaa-speaking people is a major cause of language shift, especially in urban communities, such as Babati (Harvey et al. 2016; Griscom, Harvey & Lindfield 2018). This reflects a perception that, with use of Gorwaa already fairly weak, and parents of mixed marriages typically choosing to speak Swahili in the home, children have virtually no opportunity to learn or use Gorwaa, and will therefore develop only passive knowledge at best. The actual dynamics of Gorwaa language use in mixed marriages deserves further examination.

7.20 Kinship and marriage – associated linguistic genres

Bride price and bride price negotiations are still important parts of weddings, and continue to be conducted in the traditional Gorwaa manner and in Gorwaa. Due to the intimate nature of such events, I have been unable so far to record bride-price negotiations being carried out, though I have been present at one. In addition to the use of specialized vocabulary having to do with the animals and transactions, the negotiation speech genre was characterised by a high level of formality, tact, and deference to senior men present. Turn-taking seemed particularly well-defined, and interruptions were minimal.

The gift-giving ceremony which occurs shortly after the wedding, is another speech-context which features negotiation, albeit highly ritualized, with acceptance or rejection of gifts indicated by whether the bride eats or refuses handfuls of food. Again, because of the intimate nature of this kind of event, I have yet to record a representative example. A version, featuring extensive interjections from an attendant, is available in [20160123b] and [20160123c].

7.21 Other speech genres

The following is, more or less, a short list of various other genres which were recorded, but not included above. Each of these (as well as the larger contexts in which they are contained) are all worth further examination.

As has probably been implied above, traditional music imbues Gorwaa life in situations ranging from the sacred to the profane, and several music genres have been mentioned above. Of what remains, there are several clear

subdivisions: battle songs [20151004f] sung by lines of warriors carrying spears before heading into conflict; protest songs [20160927e], [20160927g] sung by groups of young men as part of an elaborate ritual for when the virility of their fellows has been slighted by a woman; running songs [20151202c], [20160120d], [20160127k], sung for amusement when running from one place to another; and earth-moving songs [20160225s], sung by women taking earth from the inside of a newly-constructed house and placing it on the roof. Clearly, the contexts of these songs are all quite different, but further study and classification remains to be done. Suffice it to say that they, at least, constitute emic genres, in that they were repeatedly divided thus by Gorwaa-speakers themselves.



Figure 10. Gorwaa musical instruments, (c) 2019 Andrew Harvey.

Clockwise from top left: *seense* fiddle [20160217zc], Tluway De'emay's son with a *gidondoori* musical bow [20161112w], *irimba* thumb piano [20160217zd], and *foori* flute [20160217ze].

Christian music, a major genre across Tanzania, is tremendously popular throughout Gorwaaland, and many choirs have a handful of Gorwaa-language songs, either remaining from the times of early missions to the region, or improvised by local choir directors. Musically, these songs are clearly different from their traditional counterparts, and lyrically, the content often derives from Bible passages or key messages of Christianity. Examples include [20130916a_20150725g], [20150726b], [20160219i].

A final speech genre is that of the diviner as he counts stones in order to determine prospects for clients. Typically, this is done at the house of the diviner, who sits with legs spread and spills out a number of small stones from a hollow gourd. Clients sit nearby, following the dialogue into which the diviner enters with the stones. Linguistically, this event is marked by a back-and-forth between the diviner asking questions of the stones, spreading them in front of himself, and then revealing an answer by reading their number and distribution. Questions and answers are punctuated by periods of counting, using several lexical items (especially for specific numbers and counts) that are otherwise not present in Gorwaa. The diviner also punctuates utterances with light spitting sounds, essential in animating the stones with their power. Several divining sessions have been recorded, including [20151003d] and [20151003e], and [20160120a] and [20160120p].

8. Conclusion

This work is the attempt of a linguist to contextualize the language he has been studying for the past seven years. Gorwaa is spoken primarily in Babati district by no more than around 133,000 people. Some Gorwaa speakers may also speak Iraqw, Alagwa, Rangi, Mbugwe, and/or one or more of the Datooga dialects, but virtually all Gorwaa speakers also speak Swahili, a language which is increasingly replacing Gorwaa as the primary communication medium in both urban as well as rural areas. Indeed, in urban areas such as Babati town, children are no longer speaking Gorwaa, and in rural areas, though transmission continues, the domains of use are continually losing ground to Swahili. While older people still see the utility of speaking Gorwaa, many young people do not see it as a language of employment or wider opportunity, to the point that they may feel ashamed to speak it in the presence of outsiders. The endangerment status of Gorwaa is compounded by the fact that it is not commonly written, and the only record to date is the author's corpus of audiovisual materials.

This work also addresses several aspects of Gorwaa lifeways and culture with particular relevance to the language context, namely: natural resources and faith, the economy, education, societal and political organization, and kinship and marriage. In an attempt to exemplify the diversity and richness of the language, specific speech genres have been included in each subsection.

As an outsider, these language contexts are based primarily on observation and the contents of cultural texts collected primarily for the linguistic structures they contain. This account would benefit in the future from input by a local Gorwaa linguist to revise and enrich the present account with lived experience.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to an anonymous reviewer and Peter Austin, whose comments on earlier drafts made this work stronger. Remaining errors and shortcomings are mine. I owe special thanks to both Dr. Katheryn Ranhorn, who provided extensive guidance on how to collect coordinates and make the map of Gorwaaland (Figure 2), as well as Paschal Bu'ú', who collected most of the community locations. Andrea Tsino Tluway and Mchunghaji Hezekiah Kodi helped with sketching out the Gorwaa economic calendar (Table 5). To the hundreds of Gorwaa community members who have now participated in and contributed to this project, it is important to state that I owe my career to studying the Gorwaa culture and language which are theirs, and I hope that I may be able to return such a precious gift in kind. To Ayí Raheli Lawi and the rest of the family at my home at Ayá Hheewasí, *na 'aasé' wa ló'*.

Muhtasari wa Kiswahili

Kazi hii ni jaribu la mwanaisimu kueleza lugha ya Kigorowa kwenye mazingira yake iliyeongelewa. Kwa kiasi kubwa, Kigorowa kinazungumzwa na watu takriban 133,000 wilayani Babati. Sio adimu kwamba wazungumzaji wa Kigorowa waweza kuongea Kiiraqw, Chasi, Kirangi, na moja au zaidi ya lahaja za Kidatooga, lakini karibu watu wote wanaoongea Kigorowa huongea Kiswahili pia. Tena, lugha ya Kiswahili inaendelea kuingia mahali pa Kigorowa kama lugha mkuu mjini, pamoja na vijijini. Kwa mfano, huko Babati mjini, watoto hawaongei lugha ya Kigorowa tena. Na hata kama mpisho wa Kigorowa kutoka wazazi kwa watoto unaendelea kijijini, bado Kigorowa kinapotea mawanda ya matumizi kwa Kiswahili. Wakati wazee wanaendelea kuona thamani ya kuongea Kigorowa, vijana wengi hawakithamini Kigorowa kama lugha ya ajira au nafasi ya kujiendeleza, mpaka huona aibu kukiongea Kigorowa kati ya watu wasiye wa jamii. Hatari ya Kigorowa kupotezwa inazidishwa kwa kuwa hakiandikwi kwa kawaida, na hifadhi yake pekee ni kongoo ya sauti na video ambaye mwandishi huyu ameunda yenyewe.

Pia, kazi hii inasimulia kuhusu sura kadhaa za utamaduni wa Wigorowa, hasa zile zinazohusika na hali ya lugha. Sura hizi zinahusu: rasilimali na imani, uchumi, elimu, utaratibu wa uongozi na jamii, pamoja na udugu na ndoa. Kuonyesha upana wa lugha hii, namna mbalimbali ya kutumia Kigorowa zinaangaliwa kwenye kila kifungu.

Kama mgeni, mawazo yangu yametegemea na uangalizi wangu pamoja na data zilizokusanywa kwa ajili ya utafiti wangu wa isimu. Kwa hiyo, somo hili ingeboreshwa tele kama, siku moja, mwanaisimu Mgorowa akisahihisha kazi yangu na ujuzi kutoka mazoezi ya maisha yake.

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