Empirical Approaches
to Language Typology

35

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Aspects of Language Contact

New Theoretical, Methodological and Empirical Findings with Special Focus on Romancisation Processes

edited by

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Romancisation worldwide[1]

Thomas Stolz

1. Introduction

The Romance phylum boasts a long and variegated history of language contacts which presumably began long before the oaths of Strasbourg were taken in AD 842[2]. In Europe, an extended border of several thousand kilometres not only separates, but also brings together Romance languages and members of the Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic phyla. Albanian, Greek and non-Indo-European languages such as Hungarian (Uralic), Maltese (Afro-Asiatic) and the genetic isolate Basque have been involved in rather intensive contacts with various Romance languages. In addition to these neighbourhood relations on European soil, there are also long standing contacts across the Mediterranean Sea in which the Afro-Asiatic languages of the Semitic and Hamitic phyla participate. Romance languages are involved in various *Sprachbünde*: French, together with Dutch and German, belongs to the core of the SAE (Standard Average European) languages, the so-called *Charlemagne Sprachbund*. The other Romance languages outside the Balkans are also bona fide SAE languages (Haspelmath 2001). Rumanian however joins its non-Romance neighbours Bulgarian, Macedonian, Albanian and Greek in the *Balkan Sprachbund* (Sandfeld 1968). Practically all members of the Romance phylum partake in the *Mediterranean Sprachbund*, which is comprised of all Circum-Mediterranean languages and some other languages of the immediate hinterland (Ramat and Stolz 2002). From the 15th century onwards, four major Romance languages – Portuguese, Spanish, French, and relatively late, Italian – diffused into their respective zones of influence overseas during the first era of colonialism. Contact was made with indigenous languages in Africa, the Americas, South to East Asia and Oceania. Sometimes the Romance languages were affected by the adstratal, substratal and/or superstratal impact of their contact partners and through this distinct local varieties of Romance have developed.[3] Moreover, in various places, new languages arose from the contact between Romance-speaking colonisers and speakers of non-European languages. Today, the number of Creole languages with a predominantly or partially Romance lexicon is impressive. Romance languages have also contributed substan-

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A case of weak Romancisation: Italian in East Africa

Mauro Tosco

1. Background on history

The spread of the Italian language and Italian loans in East Africa is a legacy of Italy's involvement in Eritrea, Somalia, and, for a shorter time, Ethiopia.

Italy became interested in the African coast of the Red Sea as early as 1869, when a private shipping company bought the Bay of Assab, in what is today Southern Eritrea. Assab became an Italian colony in 1882, while the conquest of the whole of Eritrea came in 1885 as a consequence of the Mahdist revolution in Sudan: with the British approval, the Italians conquered Massawa on the coast, and, after the death of King Yohannes of Ethiopia in March 1889, the Highlands, with the towns of Keren and Asmara. After the rise to power of King Menelik's in Ethiopia, the borders of the Eritrean colony were determined in 1889.

At the same time, in 1889, Italy got the protectorate over the Majarteen area of North-east Somalia, on the tip of the Horn; this was further extended to the whole coast by an agreement with the Sultan of Zanzibar (1893).

Italian rule in Somalia was for a time at best indirect, through a private society. Only for a short time starting in 1896, and then definitey from 1905, the Italian government directly took on the administration of the colony, trying to push inland amidst fierce resistance. The true colonization of Somalia developed actually after World War 1 only and received further impulse with the rise to power of Fascism. At the London Convention (1924) Italy received from Great Britain as a compensation for participation in the World War the *Oltregiuba,* i.e., the territory extending from the Western bank of the Juba river up to the present Somali-Kenyan border. In 1935–1936 the Italians occupied the whole of Ethiopia, giving rise to a short-lived Empire. "A.O.I." (*Africa Orientale Italiana*) came to an end in 1941. After War World 2 former Italian Somalia became a UN Trusteeship trusted to Italy in preparation for independence (1960), when the Somali Republic was born out of former Italian Somalia and British Somaliland.[1]

2. Education in Italian East Africa: the unplanned spread of Italian

Education, especially for "natives", never loomed large among the concerns of Italian authorities: for Eritrea, Pankhurst (1962: 255–256) gives a list of schools for Europeans and for Africans. The level of the latter was very low, and catered in particular for the local troops, the *ascari*. Up to 1938 half-castes who had been recognised by their fathers were admitted to Italian schools.

During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia strong emphasis was given, at the official level, to separate Europeans and Africans and to prevent the latter from acquiring positions of responsibility in the administration. Actually, official records report how local administrators (Commissioners and Residents) often tried to improve education.[2] In Eritrea secondary teaching for natives was suppressed, and special schools of arts and crafts were set up.

All over Italian East Africa the level of education and enrollment in schools was generally very low. At the onset of the Italian presence in the area, a modicum of literacy was possible in Somalia only in Arabic – the standardization of Somali had to wait until 1972. Toward the end of the 19th century the only true written language of the Orthodox Christians of Eritrea and Ethiopia was Classical Ethiopic, or Ge'ez, since many centuries a dead language. Literature in Amharic was spreading, but it was still regarded suspiciously by the traditional elites. As for Eritrea, the major local Ethiosemitic language, Tigrinya (nowadays one of the official languages of Eritrea) was written, printed and disseminated by the Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

As Eritrea was for a long time considered "the" Italian colony in East Africa, the spread of Italian throughout East Africa was largely due to the influence of the better Italianized Eritreans and the native colonial troops (many of them from Eritrea), often using simplified varieties of Italian (Voigt 2007: 222).

The number of Italians residing in Ethiopia and Eritrea was very substantial; e.g. from January to July 1936 about 131,000 workers were brought over as settlers to Ethiopia; in 1938 they represented half of the population of Eritrea's capital town, Asmara (Voigt 2007: 222).

The number of Italians decreased first after World War 2, but even more drastically after the nationalizations of 1975 and in later years. One third of all Italians lived in Asmara, and an absolute majority in Eritrea, although it is doubtful that, even in the early '70s, 'next to Tigrinya, the native language of most Eritreans, Italian is the most important language in Eritrea' (Habte-Mariam 1976: 272).

In any case, the vast majority of country-dwellers had little if anything to do with the Italians and their language. Among city-dwellers, a sharp division obtained between those who had some degree of Italian education, and whose knowledge of Italian could be fairly good, and the majority, who spoke at best some form of "simplified Italian".

Whatever spread there was of Italian in East Africa – and, considering the limited time-span, there was indeed a lot of it – it was therefore the result more of interpersonal communication than of planned effort.[3] It is also possible that much influence of Italian in Somalia dates from the times of the UN Trusteeship, after World War 2, when education in Italian was encouraged and opened to Somalis.

Italian never was an official language in independent Ethiopia and Eritrea (independent since 1991). In Somalia, Italian was officially recognized until the introduction of Somali as both the national and the official language in the seventies. In educational matters, Italy heavily cooperated with Siyaad Barre's regime in the eighties and until the end of the dictatorship in 1990. Apart from extensive commercial, political, and military help, Italy financially and technically supported the Somali National University (*Jaamacadda Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*) at Mogadishu. Several scientific departments were operated by Italian teaching staff, and Italian was a compulsory subject. A certain amount of Italian scientific and technical vocabulary therefore found its way into Somali well after political independence.

3. Weak Italianization: the case of Somali

Given the central role played by Italy in the modern history of Somalia, Somali is an optimal candidate for an analysis of the impact of Italian. Mioni (1988) has provided an excellent analysis of Italian (as well as English) loanwords in Somali, with a focus on the phonological treatment of loans, and on the basis of the *Dizionario Somalo-Italiano* (DSI).

3.1. Phonology

Very natural and straightforward processes apply in the adaptation of Italian loans to Somali.

3.1.1. Phoneme substitution

Italian phonemes absent in Somali are substituted according to the following conversion rules:

i. It. *p* → Som. ***b***[4]
ii. It. *v* → Som. ***f*** or ***w*** (apparently, a lexically-governed variation)
iii. It. palatal nasal /ɲ/ (orthographic *gn*) → Som. /nj/ (orthographic ***ny***)
iv. It. palatal lateral /ʎ/ (orthographic *gl*; of low frequency in Italian and subject to much dialectal and individual variation) → Som. /lj/ (orthographic ***ly***)

(1)

pasta	→	***baasto*** 'noodles; spaghetti'[5]
piantone	→	***biyaantooni*** 'soldier on guard, sentinel'
virus	→	***fiirus*** 'virus'
visita	→	***wiisito*** 'medical examination'
giugno (/dʒuɲ(ɲ)o/)	→	***juunyo*** 'June'
luglio (/ˈluʎ(ʎ)o/)	→	***luulyo*** 'July'

The following loan is probably an older Italian word which came into Somali through Arabic dialects:

vapore → ***baabuur*** 'lorry; car' (It. 'steam', for 'steamship')

3.1.2. Deaffricativization

The only affricate phoneme of (Standard) Somali is palatoalveolar /dʒ/ (word-finally generally devoiced to /tʃ/), which is written in the Somali orthography as ***j***. Its frequency is low, being mostly, but not only, found in Arabic loans.

Italian has both palatoalveolar /dʒ/ and (tʃ/ (orthographically *c* and *g* followed by a palatal vowel) and alveolar /ts ~ dʒ/ (free or positional allophones in most varieties; orthographically *z*; of relatively low frequency). Except for /dʒ/, which is generally preserved, the other affricates lose their stop component in Somali, turning, respectively, into /ʃ/ (orthographic ***sh***) and /s/:

(2)

gennaio	→	***jannaayo*** 'January'
ideologia	→	***idolojiyo*** 'ideology'
bicicletta (/bitʃiˈklet:a/)	→	***bushkuleeti*** 'bicycle'
farmacia (/farmaˈtʃia/)	→	***farmashiyo*** 'pharmacy'
marzo (/ˈmardzo/)	→	***maarso*** 'March'

3.1.3. Final low vowel raising

Somali nouns have a rule whereby a final /a/ is changed into /o/. The rule is generally observed in the treatment of It. loans:

(3)

It. *a#*	→	Som. ***o#***
borsa	→	***boorso*** 'purse, wallet'
mina	→	***miino*** 'mine' (the explosive charge)
posta	→	***boosto*** 'post (office), mail'

3.1.4. Vowel lengthening in stressed syllable

Vowel length is not phonemic in Italian, and is rather an automatic reflex of stress; vowel length is phonemic in Somali.

A stressed (and therefore phonetically long or semilong) vowel in an Italian loan is generally reinterpreted as a phonemically long vowel in Somali (vowel length is orthographically expressed in Somali by doubling the relevant letter):

(4)

It. /ˈv/ (= [v., v:])	→	Som. /v:/
agosto	→	***agoosto*** 'August'
bar (an English loan in Italian)	→	***baar*** 'barroom, pub' (vs. Somali native ***bar*** 'half')
carta	→	***kaarto*** 'map', and its compounds and derivates:
carta bollata	→	***kaartabollaato*** 'official document paper with impressed stamp'
cartolina	→	***kaartoliino*** 'postcard'
dolce	→	***doolshe*** 'cake'
germi	→	***jeermi*** 'germs'
maggio	→	***maajo*** 'May'
tenda	→	***teendho*** 'tent'
tessera	→	***teesaro*** 'membership card'
tubo	→	***tuubbo*** 'tube, pipe' (but *tubista* → ***tubiiste*** 'plumber')

Vowel lengthening also applies to English loans: *bank* → ***baanki;*** *tank* → ***taangi***

3.1.5. Degemination

Geminates are possible and widespread in Somali at morpheme-junction but impossible within morphemes. Upon Somalization, degemination generally, but not always, applies to loans:

(5) *blocchetti* (/blo'k:et:i/) → ***bulukeeti*** 'construction block; brick'
but:
gonna 'skirt' → ***goonno*** (as well as ***goono***)

3.1.6. Cluster resolution

Somali (like in general most East African and Afroasiatic languages) does not permit word-initial clusters. The following rules apply in the treatment of Italian loans:

An initial cluster is resolved through the insertion of a copy of the first vowel:

(6)

It. #CCV$_\alpha$	→	Som. #CV$_\alpha$CV$_\alpha$
bronzo	→	***boronso*** 'bronze'
placcato	→	***bulukaati*** '(gold-/silver-/etc.) plated'
tracoma	→	***tarakoomo*** 'thracoma'
traffico	→	***taraafiko*** 'traffic police'

A sibilant-initial cluster is resolved through the insertion of the initial vowel /i/: It. #*s*CV → Som. #***is***CV as in *stadio* → ***istaadiyo*** 'stadium'. In a few cases the first element of the cluster is simply dropped, as in *scampo* → ***kaambe*** (and ***iskaambe***) 'shrimp; lobster'.

A word-internal cluster is broken either through the insertion of a copy of the next vowel, or, and apparently more often, through the insertion of a central low vowel /a/:

(7) It. _CC(C)V$_\alpha$_ → Som. i. _C(C)V$_\alpha$CV$_\alpha$_
ii. _C (C) ***a***CV$_\alpha$_

The choice between strategy i. and ii. seems to be lexically-governed:

(8) i. *disciplina* → ***dishibiliin*** 'discipline'
ii. *complesso* → ***kombaleeso*** 'complex'
iii. *padre* → ***baadari*** 'priest' (It. 'father')

In violation of these rules, avoidance of cluster resolution and relaxation of Somali word-structure are found in a few cases:

(9) *contrabbando* → ***kont(a)arabaan*** 'smuggling'
nastro → ***naastro*** 'cassette recorder' (It. 'tape')

Cluster resolution may be accompanied by voicing of the first element, as in:

(10) *cravatta* → ***garawaati*** 'necktie'
(as well as ***karawaato***, not reported in dictionaries)

Neither in Italian nor in Somali are final clusters allowed.

3.1.7. Metathesis

A few instances of metathesis are observed:

(11) *bistecca* → ***busteeki*** ~ ***buskeeti*** 'beef cutlet'
fazzoletto → ***shafoleto*** 'handkerchief'

3.2. Morphology

3.2.1. Gender assignment

Apparently, only Italian nouns have entered Somali. In both Italian and Somali nouns are categorized according to gender: M (Masculine) vs. F (Feminine).

Loans are apparently always borrowed in their Singular form. Most Italian nouns end in *-o* in the Masculine Singular and in *-a* in the Feminine Singular. Others end in *-e* and may be either Masculine or Feminine.

A noun-final ***-o*** which is raised to ***-a*** (cf. 3.1.3.) is restored before an affix (+) or clitic (=): ***-a***# → ***-o*** / __{+, =}. The rule applies to

a) native vocabulary,
b) Arabic Feminine loans (where final ***-a(h)*** is the pausal form of ***-at***),[6]
c) Italian Feminine loans.

(12) a. ****hooya*** 'mother' → ***hooyo***# (but ***hooyada*** 'the mother')
b. Ar. ***mudda*** 'period of time' → Som. ***muddo***#
(but ***muddada*** 'the period of time')
c. It. *posta* → Som. ***boosto***# 'post office, mail'
(but ***boostada*** 'the post office, the mail')

Italian Feminine nouns generally shift their final *-a* to ***-o*** and retain Feminine gender upon Somalization:

(13) It. F *antenna* → Som. F ***anteeno*** 'aerial' (Caney 1984: 107)
It. F *carta* → Som. F ***kaarto*** 'map'
It. F *borsa* → Som. F ***boorso*** 'purse, wallet'
It. F *calza* → Som. F ***iskaalso*** 'stocking, sock' (but initial ***is-*** seems to point to the adjective *scalzo* 'barefooted' as the source)

Italian Masculine nouns may retain their final *-o* and be reinterpreted as Somali Feminines: It. M nouns *-o#* → Som. F nouns ***-o#***.

(14) It. M *catalogo* (/ka'talogo/) → Som. F ***kataloogo*** 'catalogue' (Caney 1984: 86; the Italian noun has stress on the antepenultimate syllable, an impossible position for accent in Somali)
M *ferro* → Som. F ***feero*** 'flat iron'
It. M *salotto* → Som. F ***salooto*** 'living room'

The following shows an irregular vowel change: It. M *biliardo* → Som. M ***bilyaardi*** 'billiards' (unless the Plural *biliardi* is the source).

In at least one case an Italian Masculine noun retains its final *-o* and the Somali loan is collective:

(15) It. M *canguro* 'kangaroo' → Som. M ***kanguuro*** 'kangaroos'

Italian nouns ending in *-e* may have different outcomes in Somali:

a) they may simply retain their final *-e*; Somali nouns in ***-e*** are always Masculine:

(16)

It. *-e#*	→	Som M ***-e#***
It. F *cambiale*	→	Som. M ***kambiyaale*** 'promissory note'
It. M *otturatore*	→	Som. M ***tooratoore*** 'breech-block (of guns)' (listed in DSI only)

b) if Feminine, Italian loans in *-e* may shift their final vowel to ***-o***, thereby retaining the original gender:

(17)

It. F *-e#*	→	Som. F ***-o#***
It. F *corrente*	→	Som. F ***koronto*** 'electricity'

c) Italian Masculine nouns often drop their final vowel upon Somalization:

(18)

It. M -V#	→	Som. M Ø
It. M *mandarino*	→	Som. M ***mandariin*** 'tangerine'
It. M *profumo*	→	Som. M ***barafuun*** 'perfume' (in Som. ***m#*** → ***n#***)
It. M *quintale*	→	Som. M ***kiintaal*** 'quintal (one hundred kilograms)'

The latter nativization strategy means that it is often difficult to decide whether Italian or, more probably, English is the source; cf.: ***kontorool*** 'control' (from English or from Italian *controllo*?). Cf. also: It. M *passaporto* → Som. F ***baasaboorto***, M ***baasaboor*** 'passport'. The latter suggests English as the source, through resolution of both the internal and word final clusters, accompanied by vowel lengthening and phoneme substitution (*p* → ***b***): Engl. *passport* → ****passaport*** → ****passapor*** → Som. ***baasaboor***. Exactly the same steps, with loss of the final vowel followed by simplification of a word-final cluster, account for a derivation from Italian: It. *passaporto* → ****passaport*** → ****passapor*** → Som. ***baasaboor.***

Irregular forms obviously occur: the following loan changes upon Somalization both its final vowel and gender: It. F *biro* → Som. M ***biire*** 'ball-point pen'.

3.2.2. Productivity of loans

The full range of derivational processes of Somali is available to loans:

(19) ***koronto*** 'electricity' → ***korontoroge*** "electricity-turner" = 'transformer'
→ ***korontoyaqaan*** "electricity-knower" = 'electrician'
barafuun 'perfume' → ***barafuumee*** 'to perfume'
→ ***barafuumow*** 'to perfume oneself'
→ ***barafuumaysan*** '(to be) perfumed'

Loans may likewise enter in compounds. Nouns always are the first element of compounds: ***miino*** 'mine' → ***miinoxaaqe*** 'mine-sweeper' (***miino*** + ***xaaq*** 'to sweep' + nominal derivational affix ***-e***) (Caney 1984: 55). Loans are likewise very frequently used in calques: ***miino*** 'mine' → ***miinada dabinka*** 'booby-trap mine' (***miino*** + ***dabin*** 'animal trap'; both elements determined through the Feminine Article ***-ta***) (Caney 1984: 63).

4. A broader look: the semantics of Italian loans in Somali and beyond

4.1. The semantics of Italianisms in Somali

Mioni (1988) also provides figures for loans (Italian and English together) according to semantic areas. Reminding that, as Mioni (1988: 41) observes, "loanwords have been sparingly entered in the *Dizionario Somalo-Italiano*", and that Italian has since long ceased to have any kind of official role in Somalia, it is safe to say that English takes the lion's share in both DSI and the *Somali-English Dictionary* (Zorc and Osman 1993).

In order to evaluate the different weight of Italian and English as sources of loans, one may remember, as a general rule of thumb, that semantic areas "controlled" by government and its agencies are less permeable to borrowing. E.g., in his analysis of the "modernization" of Somali vocabulary, for the semantic area "Armed forces" Caney (1984) lists only It. *mina* → Som. ***miino*** 'mine' (he does not report ***tooratoore*** 'breech-block'; cf. 3.2.1.).

Banking and finance are likewise poor in Italian loans, with one single exception: *conto* → ***konto*** 'account' (less used than the Arabic loan ***xisaab*** and not entered in DSI nor in Zorc and Osman 1993).

The influence of Italian is very limited in scientific terminology; for the generic term 'chemistry' Caney (1984: 81) reports both It. F *chimica* (/kimika/) → Som. F ***kimiko*** and Engl. *chemistry* → Som. M ***kimisteri*** while DSI (368) has the unassimilated form ***kiimika***, without the ***-a#*** → ***-o#*** shift.

On the other hand, loans from (Modern Standard) Arabic (i.e., to the exclusion of the immense wealth of Arabic loans which entered in Somali through the centuries, permeating almost every aspect of material and cultural life), and, to a lesser extent, English fare much better. The former dominate in the semantic fields of cultural terminology, as well as in politics and social vocabulary, and mostly in the semantic fields of politics, society, and culture (religion included, obviously), the latter in scientific and technical vocabulary.

Italian had instead an impact in terms for tools, furniture, household, vehicles, small trade, and, in general, whatever had a chance to enter the language either before standardization took over or from the spoken registers.

It is no surprise that, in such conditions, semantic specialization and shift of generic words is quite frequent, as can be seen in the following examples:

(20) It. *carta* 'paper' → *Som.* ***kaarto*** 'map' (a specialization of the Italian compound *carta geografica*)
It. *ferro* 'iron' → Som. ***feero*** 'flat iron', in Italian *ferro da stiro* ("flatting-iron"), although *ferro* is common;
It. *nastro* 'tape' → Som. ***naastro*** 'cassette recorder'
It. *visita* 'visit' → Som. ***wiisito*** 'medical examination', corresponding rather to It. *visita medica*.

4.2. Italianisms in Tigrinya

The situation in Tigrinya, the major language of Eritrea, is not very different,[7] although the longer and stronger impact of Italy is visible in a larger and more diverse influence.

As usual, Italian had a strong impact on cuisine terminology:

(21) *forno* → **forno** 'oven' (also Som. has ***foorno***)
maccheroni 'a type of noodles' → **mokkironi** (entered for Som. as ***(baasto) makarooni*** by Puglielli [1998: 381])
minestrone → **ministroni** 'vegetable soup' (reported for Som. as ***ministrooni*** by Puglielli [1998: 410]; note the unassimilated cluster /str/)
pasta → **basta** 'noodles'

as well as the following, not found in Somali:

pane → **bani** '(Western-type) bread'
salsa → **silsi** 'sauce' (although Som. has ***suugo*** from It. *sugo* with the same meaning)
vino → **vino** 'wine'

Other Italianisms entered Tigrinya in household-related vocabulary:

(22) *vasca* → **baska** 'tub'
vaso → **bazo** 'vase, chamber-pot'
villa → **villa** 'villa; Western-style house'

On the other hand, and to a larger extent than in Somali, Italian has given Tigrinya a good number of words in technology, especially automobile related vocabulary, e.g.:

(23) *freno* → **freno** 'brake' (Som. has the Engl. loan ***bareeg***, alongside Italian-derived ***fariin***)
gomma → **gomma** 'rubber; tyre' (also Som. has ***goome*** from It.)
macchina → **makina**, PL **mɛxayin** 'car' (Som. ***makiinad*** entered through Ar.)
manuale → **miniwalɛ** 'manual, handbook' (not reported for Som.)
molla → **molla** 'spring' (Som. ***moollo*** is reported by Zorc and Osman [1993: 350])
pompa → **pompa** 'pump' (for Somali, the unassimilated loan ***bomba*** is entered in Zorc and Osman [1993: 50]; it conflates with ***bomba*** 'bomb', from It. *bomba*)

Military terminology is represented at least by: *bandiera* → **bandera** 'flag'.

4.3. "Abstand languages" of the Horn and the sad fate of loans

One must never forget that national languages are, following Kloss (1967), "Ausbau languages": varieties more or less artificially selected and developed, to a certain extent purposefully created in response to ideological needs, most often of a national(istic) type.

It comes therefore as no surprise that such varieties tend to downplay the impact of loans, so that many of them never received admission in "official" Somali, Amharic, or Tigrinya, and are not listed in standard dictionaries. For Somali, many loans are typically found in the Mogadishu variety, and the same may is true of the Tigrinya spoken in Asmara, which is particularly rich in Italianisms (Voigt 2007: 223). Only work on the spoken varieties and on minority languages may hope to unveal many loans.

The "Ausbauization" of national languages is most visible in Ethiopia, where the xenophobic tendencies of Amhara intellectuals played a decisive role in the shaping of "official" Amharic, the long-time official language.[8] In 1958, Bemnet Gabre Amlak (1958: 122) described the linguistic side of the Italian occupation (which itself had lasted a bare five or six years) as a "temporary fashion of profuse mingling of Italian with one's Amharic conversation", while about the contemporary influence of English he wrote: "This is a real menace to the existence of Amharic and it would be wise to devise some remedy before the situation gets out of hand."

Yet, Italian loans crept in. At the turn of the 20th century, Armbruster's (1910) dictionary did not contain Italian loanwords, which were instead duly noticed by Leslau (1964) in his work on the history of the Amharic vocabulary. All of them belong to the everyday colloquial language of the townspeople; e.g., **faʃa** 'bandage' from It. *fascia* 'band, bandage, sash', **bako** 'package' from It. *pacco*, **sipil** 'pin' from It. *spillo*, the ubiquitous **borsa** 'purse' (cf. above for Somali), **sibago** 'string' from It. *spago*, and both **vɛrɛnda** and **bɛrɛnda** from It. *veranda*. At the same time, the corresponding "native" words given in the early 20th century by Armbruster were unused, unknown, or at times simply wrong. One would therefore look in vain in Amharic dictionaries for a number of pan-Ethiopian Italianisms which are attested even in the extreme Southwest of the country, and which in the minority languages most assuredly have not been borrowed directly from Italian but through an interethnic medium, such as Amharic or Oromo.

A couple of examples are Dhaasanac **karambela** 'sweet, candy' from It. *caramella* (either through Amharic **kɛrɛmella** or another Ethiopian language; Tosco 2001: 108), and Gawwada **tʃapparna** 'many-pocketed belt (for bullets, etc.)' from It. *giberna* 'cartridge-pouch' (unpublished field data).

A special case is provided by brand names which got generalized as common nouns. An Ethiopian-wide Italianism is found in one of the terms for 'truck; minibus' as derived from *Leoncino* ('lion cub'), an Italian light-duty truck built by O.M. from 1950 to 1972 and still widely circulating, or rather puffing its way, on the Ethiopian roads. The *Leoncino* is duly entered for Oromo as **lunchiinaa** ([**luntʃi:na:**] in the dictionary section of their grammar by Griefenow-Mewis and Bitima (1994: 318). Amharic dictionaries do not list this word, just as it is not reported in standard Oromo dictionaries.

Languages of the Ethiopian periphery were probably never reached by direct Italian influence. In certain cases they seem to opt directly for present-day competitors of the Italian loans. The Japanese brand *Isuzu*[9] has, for example, been recorded for 'truck; minibus' in Ts'amakko (Savà 2005: 219) as **ajsuze** (with a change of word-final /u/ → /e/ common in loans from Amharic).

And in the same semantic field, *balilla* (the popular name of the FIAT 508 car, produced from 1934 to 1937) is listed as a general term for 'car' even out of former Italian East Africa as, in Jibouti, in 'Afar **balilla** (PL **balilwa**; Parker and Hayward 1985: 67).

5. Between myth and reality: strong Italianization

5.1. Simplified (restructured) Italian in Eritrea

Habte-Mariam's (1976) article in the influential *Language in Ethiopia* gave rise to the notion of a Simplified Italian of Eritrea, relabelled "Restructured Italian" by Holm (1989: 609–610) with the further note that "this variety is a true pidgin".

Actually, it is more probable that the situation was not much different from what is still found (or was found till the eighties) in Somalia (cf. below, 5.2.), but with the difference that in Eritrea Italian was at times apparently used among non-Italians for interethnic communication.

Asmara, the capital of the Italian colony and of independent Eritrea alike, is situated in the area where Tigrinya is spoken. About the Italian of the Italian community in Asmara, Habte-Mariam (1976) reports that "[a]ll the Italians interviewed denied emphatically that there is a special kind of Italian used either among themselves or in speaking to Ethiopians", nor was it possible to detect in their speech "a significant deviation from standard Italian [...] except for an occasional Amharic or Tigrinya loanword" (Habte-Mariam 1976: 171). What about the Italian spoken by Eritreans?

Habte-Mariam (1976: 180), in his concluding remarks, draws a parallel with the original Lingua Franca, and suggests an origin in a foreigner-talk register. At the same time, a number of features are well in accordance with what one would indeed expect in a bona fide pidgin.

In lexicon, very little if anything substratum influence from Ethiopian languages is found. This seems to point to a possible avoidance of Amharic/Tigrinya borrowings in the speech of the early Italian speakers. In phonology, the main tendencies are:

a) Only those consonants which are common to both Italian and the local languages are preserved.

b) The phonological system of the substratum operates in the adaptation of the Italian lexicon as follows:
   - phoneme substitution:
     /p/, /v/ → /b/ ([β] between vowels) /V__)[10]
     /ʎ/ → /lj/
   - deaffricativization:
     /ts/ → /s/, /dz/ → /z/; /tʃ/, although present in Tigrinya, may be replaced by /ʃ/:
     ragazzo → **rɐgaso** 'boy'
     famiglia → **familja** 'family'

c) The Italian mid vowels /e/ and /o/ can be raised in final position:
   miele → **meli** 'honey'
   otto → **ottu** 'eight'

d) Unstressed /a/, /e/ are often backed to /ɐ/ and unstressed /i/ to /ɨ/:
   mattina → **mɐtina** 'morning'
   finito → **fɨnito** 'finished'
   parlare → **bɐrlare** 'to speak'
   pesce → **bɐʃi** 'fish'

e) Diphthongs may undergo simplification: /uo/→ /o/, /ie/ →/e/:
   niente → **nenti** 'nothing'
   buono → **bono** 'good'

f) Different from Italian loans in Somali, gemination is preserved after a stressed syllable: *sette* → ***setti*** 'seven'.

g) Like in Somali, a vowel is inserted after the first element of a cluster, but in word-initial position if the first element is a sibilant. Different from Somali, the inserted vowel is always a central /ɨ/ and not a copy of the first vowel of the loan:
   #CC → CɨC:
   classe → **kɨlase** 'class'
   troppo → **tɨrobbo** 'very much; too much'
   #sC → ɨsC:
   scuola → **ɨskola** 'school'
   stancato → **ɨstankato** 'tired'

Other pidgin-like features are evident in the radical simplification of grammar:

a) Agreement is greatly reduced or downright absent. Articles and copulas are omitted:
   kwesto due mɨjo sorella
   this (M.S) two my (M.S) sister
   'these are my two sisters' (It. *queste sono le mie due sorelle*; no agreement between demonstrative, possessive, and noun; no plural form of the noun; no copula).

b) A pronominal subject cannot be omitted. The auxiliaries 'to be' and 'to have' are omitted in the past; the Infinitive is used for all non-past tenses and the Past Participle for the past:
   ɨjo lɐwrare 'I work/am working/will work' (It. Infinitive *lavorare*) vs.
   ɨjo lɐwrato 'I worked' (It. Past Participle *lavorato*)

c) The verb *stare* can take the place of *essere* 'to be' (as in many Southern varieties in Italy); **tʃe** from Italian *c'è* 'there is' is also used for possession:

adesso loro stare amiko
now they to-be-there friend
'Now they are friends' (It. *adesso (loro) sono amici*)

ijo non tʃe makkina
I not there-is car
'I don't have a car' (It. *io non ho la macchina*)

d) Somewhat unexpectedly, the subject pronouns **ijo** *io* 'I' (It. *io*) and sometimes – and strangely – **tu** 'you (Singular)' (It. *tu*) are preserved against the non-nominative forms *me* and *te*, respectively. Indirect object pronouns are often preceded by the preposition **bɛr** from Italian *per* 'for, to', while prepositions of direction/movement are generally omitted:

noj dato soldi bɛr loro
we given money for them
'we gave them (the) money' (It. *noi gli abbiamo dato (i) soldi*)

ijo andato addis abɛba
I gone A. A.
'I went to Addis Ababa" (It. *(io) sono andato a Addis Abeba*; no auxiliary and no preposition).

e) Influence of substratum is probably found in the positioning of subordinate clauses before main ones, in accordance with the verb-final syntax of most languages of the Horn:

si luj bɛnire non bɛnire ijo non sabere
if him to-come not to-come I not to-know
'I don't know whether he'll come or not'

5.2. A pidginized Italian of Somalia?

Banti (1990) is probably the only existing analysis of Italian as spoken in Somalia based upon a corpus of actual sentences. Banti's corpus was very small and drawn from two speakers only, namely, two Somali women employed as house workers by Italian expatriates in the eighties.

To anticipate Banti's most important result, no Italian-based pidgin emerges from the data. The corpus rather reflects a mid to poor knowledge of Italian – extremely poor in terms of morphology and syntax in the case

of one speaker, somewhat better in the other. More importantly, the two women had extremely different levels of competence: e.g., speaker A produced a fairly good number of morphosyntactically correct compound verbal forms, such as

☺ *ho capito* 'I (have) understood' (correct Auxiliary and correct Subject Agreement on the Participle)[11]
☺ *è andata* 'she went/has gone' (correct Auxiliary and correct Gender Agreement on the Participle)

as well as:

☹ *ha vista* for *ha visto* (hypercorrection: Gender Agreement with a transitive verb)

On the other hand, Speaker A also produced many incorrect forms:

☹ *ha visto* 's/he saw/has seen' for It. *hai visto* 'you saw/have seen' (incorrect Subject Agreement)

Both speakers were subject to phonological mistakes:

/b/ for **/p/**: ☹ ***abri*** for *apri* 'open (SG)!' (Speaker A)
/w/ for **/v/**: ☹ ***waj*** for *vai* 'go (SG)!' (Speaker B)

Speaker B also produced future forms (☺ *vedrai* 'you (SG) will see'), but made more often than Speaker A several mistakes in the choice of auxiliary, in agreement, and in the use of the subject verbal affixes; in syntax, she showed extensive simplifications and "regularizations" in clause linking:

☺ *non posso dire* 'I can't say' (Speaker B)

but

☹ *vado prendere* for *vado a prendere* 'I go and (to) take' (Speaker B)

Certainly the points in common between this "simplified Italian of Somalia" and the "Restructured Italian of Eritrea" discussed above (5.1.) are striking: is there a common origin? This seems to be the answer adumbrated by Banti, who hints at a "common tradition" rather than to "parallel developments", without further elaboration. One can hypothesize that the Eritrean troops deployed to Somalia by the Italian authorities during the colonial times may have acted as middlemen in the acquisition of a modicum of Italian on the part of Somalis, especially in Mogadishu. It is interesting to note that the same (although very simple and somewhat expected) semantic shifts and specializations appear in both Eritrea and Somalia, such as:

It. *padre* 'father' → **bɐdri** '(Catholic) priest'
(cf. above, 3.1.6., Som. ***baadari***)

A simplified and unstable form of Italian very probably continued to be in use among uneducated Somali when entering in contact with the Italian community. It is also possible that its use was actually boosted in the seventies and eighties: formal education in Italian was no longer available, while the number of educated Somali of the older generations (often speaking "good" Italian) and of Italian residents (many of them with a certain command of Somali) was slowly decreasing. At the same time, there was a burgeoning number of Italian expatriates working in technical cooperation and education, many of them spending relatively short periods of time in the country.

Another possibility is that there is indeed something like a "natural" way of simplifying Italian, whenever the right conditions apply. As expected, copulas will be omitted, gender agreement will tend to get lost, and allomorphy in general will get starkly simplified. Only further work on the Italian spoken by the Somali and Eritrean communities in Italy will help clarify the whole issue.

6. Conclusions

The influence played by Italian on the languages of the Horn of Africa is a typical case of normal, "non-cataclysmic" language contact, in which a certain amount of lexical material from a dominating language is accommodated in the languages of the dominated groups. No deep, structural impact is observed. Contact itself may be quite limited, both in terms of the number of speakers actively involved in it and of its time-span.

Just as the time-honored *Leoncino* is nowadays inexorably being replaced by Japanese *Isuzu*, so the Italian-derived Somali ***feero*** 'flat iron' and ***iskaalso*** 'stocking; sock' are competed by the Arabic loans ***kaawiyad*** and ***sharabaad***, while in the North for 'school' the English loan ***iskuul*** is preferred to ***iskool***, from Italian *scuola*. And alongside ***kaartoliino*** 'postcard', ***farankaboolo*** 'stamp', and ***garawaati*** 'necktie' the English loans ***booskaardh***, ***staam***, and ***niigtayn*** have made their appearance (although they are not yet recorded in dictionaries, nor they have been fully assimilated: note the initial or final cluster, in violation of Somali word-formation rules).

Moreover, the absence of a central government and the separatist tendencies (with a de facto independent Somaliland) within the Somali-inhabited

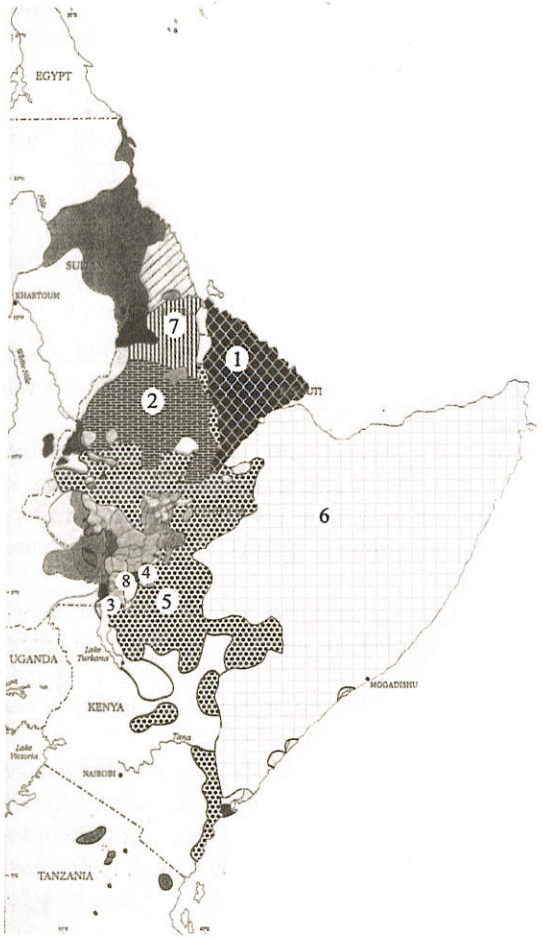
country are certainly bound to have linguistic effects: the outcome can well be the birth of two slightly divergent written varieties of Somali, a Northern and a Southern one, paralleling in a way the existing differences in the spoken language, and drawing on divergent sources for loans and calques. The time of Italian in the Horn of Africa may well be over. But an Italian, and therefore Romance, layer will certainly remain.

Notes

1. The Somali-inhabited portions of French Somaliland (later the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas, nowadays the Republic of Djibouti), Ethiopia, and Kenya remained out of Somalia, and have been a constant source of international tensions since then.
2. It must be said that Pankhurst's (1962) account has strong anti-Catholic and anti-Italian overtones and is overtly biased and apologetic toward the Imperial Ethiopian government of the time.
3. That schools, and in particular official, government-mandated education have had little to do with the spread of It. comes of course as no surprise: we know by now, especially since Graff (1987), how even in Europe the spread of literacy had historically little to do with governments efforts, and much the same can be said of the U.S. (Tooley 2002).
4. In examples, the following abbreviations are used: Ar. = Arabic, F = feminine, M = masculine, SG = singular, Engl. = English, It. = Italian, PL = plural, Som. = Somali.
5. Unless otherwise stated, all Somali data are from DSI and are written in the official national orthography.
6. F nouns borrowed from modern, literary Arabic retain their final *-t* and change it to *-d* upon Somalization. E.g., Ar. *jabhat* → Som. *jabhad* '(political) front', Ar. *wazaarat* → Som. *wasaarad* 'ministry'; Caney (1984) presents and discusses many such loans. An early analysis of Arabic vocabulary in Somali is Zaborski (1967). In many cases both a *o*-final and a *ad*-final form are found side by side; e.g. Ar. *sanat* → Som. *sano* and *sannad* 'year'.
7. The following account is based essentially upon Voigt (2007).
8. The present, federal constitution of Ethiopia has reserved to Amharic the role of "working language of the Parliament" only.
9. In general, the light-duty trucks of the "N" series are found in Ethiopia.
10. Habte-Mariam's transcription is modified here according to the system used in the preceding paragraphs and following more closely IPA conventions. In particular: Habte-Mariam's /ɛ/ → /ɐ/ and /y/ → /j/.
11. Banti's (1990) transcription, which reproduces the Italian orthography, is used here.

Appendix

Approximate geographic location and genetic classification of the languages of the Horn of Africa mentioned in the article.



1. 'Afar: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Lowland > Saho-'Afar
2. Amharic: Afroasiatic > Semitic > West > South > Ethiopian > South > Transversal
3. Dhaasanac: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Lowland > Omo-Tana > West
4. Gawwada: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Dullay
5. Oromo: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Lowland > Oromoid
6. Somali: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Lowland > Omo-Tana > East
7. Tigrinya: Afroasiatic > Semitic > West > South > Ethiopian > North
8. Ts'amakko: Afraosiatic > Cushitic > East > Dullay

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Loan word gender: A case of romancisation in Standard German and related enclave varieties

Christel Stolz

Wer die Wahl hat, hat die Qual
(German saying)

1. Introduction[1]

The research presented here is part of a larger project with the working title *Towards a typology of lexical integration. Mechanisms of assigning gender to loan nouns in European gender languages*. Although many languages with the grammatical category of gender exist outside of Europe, Europe is one of the hotbeads for gender (Schmidt 1977/1926: 350; Corbett 2005a–c). I regard each language as European that is spoken west of the Uralic and north of the North African shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The topic, the typology of gender assignment, links the following fields of research: contact linguistics, typology, lexicology, and dialectology. Dialectology is included insofar as, for a restricted set of languages, I do not only seek to analyse the gender integration behaviour of the standard languages, but to include several dialectal, substandard and enclave varieties. This will help to answer the question whether the gender integration principles are the same for varieties of a common standard language or not, and what the nature of these principles is, questions that are addressed in this paper.

Let's take for granted a commonplace of contact linguistics (Thomason 2001: 70) which states that nouns are generally borrowed more often than elements of other word classes. If a noun is borrowed into a gender language, the loan noun has to be integrated into the morphological structure of the borrowing language by acquiring a gender category, beside other morphological properties. Following Hockett and Corbett, I regard any language as gender language that has "classes of nouns reflected in the behaviour of associated words". (Hockett 1958: 231, quoted in Corbett 1991: 1).[2]

From the first moments of borrowing, lexical integration takes place on various levels of language structure, i.e. phonology, morphology, and semantics. There are differences in the degree of integration and, quite often, of obligatoriness. As an example, consider the degree of phonological integration of loanwords into Standard German, which is often variable. The borrowed colour term *orange* 'orange' shows a cline of possible pronuncia-