1. Introduction
Pomona College Field Methods class, fall 2012

Maay (a.k.a. Af-Maay, MayMay; Paster 2007, Comfort & Paster 2009, Paster 2010) is a Cushitic language related to, but not mutually intelligible with, Somali. Ethnologue estimates 1.86 million speakers.

2. The Maay language

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3. Inter-speaker variation in Maay

(1) Project participants

HJ, male, mid-30s, from Jamaame (spent time in Kenya); speaks Maay, Zigua, English, Somali
JA, male, 62, from Jilib; mainly monolingual Maay speaker with a little English and Somali
HM, male, 42, from Jamaame (grew up in Mogadishu); speaks Maay, Somali, Zigua, English, Swahili
BM, female, 48, from Jamaame; speaks Maay, Zigua, Somali, English, some Swahili
LJ, male, 52, from Jamaame; speaks Maay, Zigua, Somali, English, Swahili, Italian, some Spanish
AM, male, 27, from Kismayyo (spent time in Kenya); speaks Maay, Zigua, Somali, English, Swahili, Turkana, Giryama
HA, female, 30s, from Jamaame (grew up in Kenya); speaks Maay, Zigua, Swahili, English
MA, female, 23, from Jamaame; speaks Maay, Zigua, Swahili, Somali, some English
KJ, female, 50s, from Jamaame/Kismayyo (spent time in Kenya); speaks Maay, Zigua, Somali, Swahili, some English

‘A lot of people speak in different ways, so it complicates things.’ – Speaker AM

This talk will show how we can make sense of extreme inter-speaker variation by describing individuals’ grammars separately as if they are different languages (which they are, from the ‘I-language’ perspective).

3.1 Optional multiple plural marking

Speaker OM (male, then 27, from Kowan/near Jamaame), produced the following patterns of plural marking on nouns (Comfort & Paster 2009; Paster 2007, 2010):

C-final stems have 3 plural forms in free variation; no exceptions observed; no semantic/functional distinctions identified.

(2) mukulal-yal ~ mukulal-o ~ mukulal-o-yal ‘cats’
eey-yal ~ eey-o ~ eey-o-yal ‘dogs’
geet-yal ~ geeɗ-o ~ geeɗ-o-yal ‘trees’
ees-yal ~ ees-o ~ ees-o-yal ‘grass’
miis-yal ~ miis-o ~ miis-o-yal ‘tables’
kuras-yal ~ kuras-o ~ kuras-o-yal ‘chairs’
hidik-yal ~ hidiy-o ~ hidiy-o-yal ‘stars’
basal-yal ~ basal-o ~ basal-o-yal ‘onions’
af-yal ~ af-o ~ af-o-yal ‘mouths’
kawaʃ-yal ~ kawaʃ-o ~ kawaʃ-o-yal ‘cabbages’
eren-yal ~ erem-o ~ erem-o-yal ‘goats’
yahas-yal ~ yahas-o ~ yahas-o-yal ‘crocodiles’
bbuubun-yal ~ buubun-o ~ buubun-o-yal ‘snails’
bin-yal ~ bin-o ~ bin-o-yal ‘pins’

V-final stems can only form their plural with -yal; no exceptions observed.

(3) jati-yal ‘shirt’ bakaile-yal ‘rabbits’
bbundo-yal ‘bridge’ muata-yal ‘ducks’
mdini-yal ‘knife’ raka-yal ‘frogs’
bbaka-yal ‘box’ mateeesa-yal ‘peanuts’
bbawaesaa-yal ‘worm’ mbaa-yal ‘heads’
liwa-yal ‘lion’ indo-yal ‘eyes’
dedji-yal ‘snake’ bakeeri-yal ‘cups’

Speaker BM has similar patterns to OM with some interesting differences.

Like OM, BM gives only the -yal form for (most) V-final nouns:

(4) mdini-yal *mind-o *mind-i-o *mind-o-yal *mind-i-o-yal ‘knives’
bbakeeti-yal-ki *bbekeedi-o *bbekeeti-o *bbekeedi-o-yal *bbekeeti-o-yal ‘forks’
wɔbi-yal *wɔbi-o *wɔbi-i-o *wɔbi-o-yal *wɔbi-o-yal ‘rivers’
For some V-final nouns, it is also possible to replace the final V with -o; in these cases the -o- yal form is also possible:
(5) jini-yal-ki ~ jin-o-yi  jini-o-yi ~ jin-o-yl-ki  jini-o-yl-ki  ‘bees’
kora-yl-ki ~ kor-o  kora-o  kor-o-yl-ki  kora-o-yl-ki  ‘(monkey species)’

For most C-final nouns, three forms are possible:
(6) megal-yl ~ megel-o  ~ megel-o-yl  ‘men’
irit-yl ~ iriβ-o  ~ iriβ-o-yl  ‘needles’
dik-yl-ki ~ diɣ-o  ~ diɣ-o-yl  ‘roosters’
hambal-yl-ki ~ hambal-o  ~ hambal-o-yl-ki  ‘leaves’
basal-yl ~ basal-o  ~ basal-o-yl  ‘onions’
hawuk-yl ~ hawuɣ-o  ~ hawuɣ-o-yl  ‘corn (pl.)’
haβak-yl-ki ~ haβak-o  ~ haβak-o-yl  ‘ropes’
ilbab-yl ~ ilbaβ-o  ~ ilbaβ-o-yl  ‘doors’
belet-yl ~ belet-o  ~ belet-o-yl  ‘cities’
nal-yl-ki ~ nal-o  ~ nal-o-yl-ki  ‘lights’
baril-yl-ki ~ baril-o  ~ baril-o-yl  ‘rice (pl.)’
rob-yl-ki ~ rob-o  ~ rob-o-yl  ‘rains’
moos-yl ~ moos-o  ~ moos-o-yl  ‘bananas’
buk-yl ~ buɣ-o  ~ buɣ-o-yl-ki  ‘books’
dik-yl ~ diɣ-o  ~ diɣ-o-yl  ‘ears’
kob-yl ~ koβ-o  ~ koβ-o-yl  ‘cups’
gœt-yl ~ gœt-o  ~ gœt-o-yl-ki  ‘trees’
sun-yl-kaŋ ~ sum-o-ŋ  ~ sum-o-yl-kaŋ  ‘poisons’
don-yl-ki ~ doom-o  ~ doom-o-yl  ‘boats’
dinan-yl ~ dinam-o  ~ dinam-o-yl  ‘babies’
ees-yl-kaŋ ~ ees-o  ~ ees-o-yl  ‘grasses’
dʒer-yl-ki ~ dʒer-o-ŋ  ~ dʒer-o-yl  ‘hippos’
kuraas-yl-ki ~ kuraas-o  ~ kuraas-o-yl-ki  ‘sofas’
ber-yl ~ ber-o  ~ ber-o-yl-ki  ‘gardens’
luk-yl ~ luɣ-o  ~ luɣ-o-yl-ki  ‘feet’
ʤit-yl ~ʤit-o  ~ʤit-o-yl  ‘roads’
ʤan-yl-ki ~ʤan-o  ~ʤan-o-yl  ‘jaws’

However, for some nouns she rejects the -o form but gives both -yal and -o- yal:
(7) af-yl  *af-o  ~ af-o-yl-kaŋ  ‘mouths’
dɛp-yl-ki  *dɛp-o  ~ dɛp-o-yl-ki  ‘fires’
loos-yl-ki  *loos-o  ~ loos-o-yl-ki  ‘peanuts’

**Speaker AM**

Usually only the -yl form is given for V-final stems:
(8) bundo-yl  *bundo-o  *bundo-o-yl  *bundo-o-yl  ‘bridges’
 dedʒi-yl  *dedʒ-o  *dedʒ-o-yl  *dedʒ-o-yl  ‘snakes’
mind-yl  *mind-o  *mind-o-yl  *mind-o-yl  ‘knives’
muata-yl  *muat-o  *muat-o-yl  *muat-o-yl  ‘ducks’
bakeeri-yl  *bakeer-o  *bakeer-o-yl  *bakeer-o-yl  ‘glasses’
shati-yl  *shat-o  *shat-o-yl  *shat-o-yl  ‘shirts’
gooma-yl  *goom-o  *goom-o-yl  *goom-o-yl  ‘pigs’
rooti-yl  *root-o  *root-o-yl  *root-o-yl  ‘breads’
AM never gives a V-final noun with the -o suffix attached after the root-final V.

In a very few exceptional cases, AM replaces the final vowel with -o:

(9) bakaile-yal ~ bakail-o *bakaile-o *bakaile-o-yal *bakaile-o-yal ‘rabbits’
    maɗa-yal ~ maɗ-o *maɗ-o *maɗ-o-yal *maɗa-o-yal ‘heads’
    raka-yal ~ rak-o *raka-o *rak-o-yal *raka-o-yal ‘frogs’

AM gives only 2 forms for most C-final stems, rejecting the -o-yal forms:

(10) los-yal ~ los-o *loos-o-yal ‘peanuts’
    eey-yal ~ eey-o *eey-o-yal ‘dogs’
    goryan-yal ~ goryaam-o *goryaam-o-yal ‘stomach worms’
    kop-yal ~ koɓ-o *koɓ-o-yal ‘cups’
    ees-yal ~ ees-o *ees-o-yal ‘grasses’
    af-yal ~ af-o *af-o-yal ‘mouths’
    dʒer-yal ~ dʒeer-o *dʒeer-o-yal ‘hippos’
    los-yal ~ loo-o *loos-o-yal ‘peanuts’
    ber-yal ~ beer-o *beer-o-yal ‘gardens’/‘livers’
    kal-yal ~ kaal-o *kaal-o-yal ‘spoons’
    dʒit-yal ~ dʒiɗ-o *dʒiɗ-o-yal ‘roads’
    det-yal ~ deɗ-o *deɗ-o-yal ‘peoples’
    mos-yal ~ moos-o-o-yal ‘bananas’
    diik-yal ~ diiy-o *diiy-o-yal ‘roosters’
    nan-yal ~ nals-o *nals-o-yal ‘lights’
    sun-yal ~ suum-o-yal ‘belts’
    mukulaal-yal ~ mukulaao-o *mukulaao-o-yal ‘cats’
    kuras-yal ~ kuraas-o *kuraas-o-yal ‘chairs’
    basal-yal ~ basal-o *basal-o-yal ‘onions’

AM does give three forms for some C-final nouns:

(11) geet-yal ~ geeɗ-o ~ geeɗ-o-yal ‘trees’
    karton-yal ~ kartoon-o ~ kartoon-o-yal ‘boxes’
    biin-yal ~ biin-o/biin-o ~ biin-o-yal/biin-o-yal ‘pins’
    eren-yal ~ erem-o ~ erem-o-yal ‘goats’
    eey-yal ~ eey-o ~ eey-o-yal ‘dogs’
    buk-yal ~ buuy-o ~ buuy-o-yal ‘books’
    dɛk-yal ~ dɛy-o ~ dɛy-o-yal ‘ears’
    minin-yal ~ minim-o ~ mimin-o-yal ‘houses’
    ukun-yal ~ ukum-o ~ ukum-o-yal ‘eggs’

For other nouns, the -o-yal form is accepted but dispreferred (perhaps volunteered once, then rejected):

(12) mas-yal ~ mas-o *mas-o-yal *mas-o-yal ‘snake’
    sanduk-yal ~ sanduuy-o *sanduuy-o-yal ‘drawers’
    hindik-yal ~ hindiy-o *hindiy-o-yal ‘stars’
    mis-yal ~ miis-o *miis-o-yal ‘tables’

For two nouns, the -o form was rejected in favor of the -yal form. For these nouns, there is also no -o-yal form:

(13) amel-yal ~ amee-o *ameel-o *ameel-o-yal *ameel-o-yal ‘mugs’
    sun-yal ~ suum-o *suum-o-yal ‘poisons’ (cf. ‘belts’)

**Speaker HJ**

HJ is relatively permissive with multiple plural marking, allowing it for most nouns that have an -o form:

(14) geet-yal ~ geeɗ-o ~ geeɗ-o-yal ‘trees’
    zeetun-yal ~ zeetum-o ~ zeetum-o-yal ‘papayas’
    dʒer-yal ~ dʒer-o ~ dʒer-o-yal ‘hippos’
beer-yal ~ beer-o ~ beer-o-yal  ‘livers’/‘gardens’
yahas-yal ~ yahas-o ~ yahas-o-yal  ‘crocodiles’
nal-yal ~ nal-o ~ nal-o-yal  ‘lights’
kaal-yal ~ kaal-o ~ kaal-o-yal  ‘spoons’

Three exceptions were observed, where an -o form is accepted but the -o-yal form is rejected:
(15)  miis-yal ~ miis-o *miis-o-yal  ‘tables’
dep-yal ~ dep-o *dep-o-yal  ‘fires’
buug-yal ~ buug-o *buug-o-yal  ‘books’

In one case HJ even produces a form with -yal-o – the only such example produced by any of our speakers:
(16)  ey-yal ~ ey-o ~ ey-o-yal/ey-o-yal  ‘dogs’

The existence of a -yal form is not necessary for the -o-yal form to be accepted:
(17)  *kop-yal koβ-o ~ koβ-o-yal  ‘shoes’

The presence of an -o form seems to be a necessity for the -o-yal form to be accepted (just as for AM, but not for BM):
(18)  *ees-yal *ees-o *ees-o-yal  ‘grasses’
af-yal *af-o *af-o-yal  ‘mouths’
los-yal *los-o *los-o-yal  ‘peanuts’
moos-yal *moos-o *moos-o-yal  ‘bananas’
tooʃ-yal *tooʃ-o *tooʃ-o-yal  ‘flashlights’
makas-yal *makas-o *makas-o-yal  ‘scissors’

HJ did not produce any -o-yal forms for nouns lacking an -o form.

**Speaker LJ**

Many V-final nouns have -yal forms and forms with -o replacing the final V:
(19)  g¹ra-yal ~ g¹r-o *g¹ra-o *g¹r-o-yal *g¹r-a-yal  ‘watermelons’
kora-yal ~ kor-o *kora-o *kor-o-yal *kora-o-yal  ‘(monkey species)’
jini-yal ~ jini-o *jini-o *jini-o-yal *jini-o-yal  ‘bees’
raka-yal ~ raka-o *raka-o ỵa-k-o-yal *raka-o-yal  ‘frogs’

The -o-yal form is rejected or marginal for these nouns.

Some V-final nouns have only a -yal form:
(20)  embe-yal *embe-o *embe-o *embe-o-yal *embe-o-yal  ‘mangos’
maða-yal *mað-o *maða-o *mað-o-yal *mað-o-yal  ‘heads’
kofia-yal *kofia-o *kofia-o *kofia-o-yal *kofia-o-yal  ‘hats’

Others have a -yal form and a form where -o attaches after the final V (not attested for any other speakers):
(21)  bakeri-yal *baker-o ~ baker-o *baker-o-yal *bakeri-o-yal  ‘cup’
diʃi-yal *diʃ-o ~ diʃi-o *diʃ-o-yal *diʃi-o-yal  ‘bulls’

One V-final noun has only the -o form; the -yal form is rejected:
(22)  *woʃi-yal *woʃ-o woʃi-o *woʃ-o-yal *woʃi-o-yal  ‘rivers’

Another example of an i-final noun has three plurals including an -o-yal form (the only example of its type):
(23)  mindi-yal *mind-o ~ mindi-o *mind-o-yal ~ mindi-o-yal  ‘knives’

Only one V-final noun was found where the stem-final V is deleted; this noun also has an -o-yal form:
(24)  waraβa-yal ~ waraβ-o *waraβa-o ~ waraβ-o-yal *waraβa-o-yal  ‘hyenas’
Most C-final roots can take either -yal or -o but not -o-ya.

(25)  
eren-yal  ~ erem-o  *ere-m-o-ya  ‘goats’
ukun-yal  ~ ukum-o  *ukum-o-ya  ‘eggs’
bubun-yal  ~ bubum-o  *bubum-o-ya  ‘snails’
galan-yal  ~ galam-o  *galam-o-ya  ‘pens’
mukulal-yal  ~ mukulal-o  *mukulal-o-ya  ‘cats’
dʒɛɛr-yal  ~ dʒɛɛr-o  *dʒɛɛr-o-ya  ‘hippos’
ey-yal  ~ ey-o  *ey-o-ya  ‘dogs’
hidik-yal  ~ hidiy-o  *hidiy-o-ya  ‘stars’
get-yal  ~ gɛɛd-o  *gɛɛd-o-ya  ‘trees’
basal-yal  ~ basal-o  *basal-o-ya  ‘onions’
af-yal  ~ af-o  *af-o-ya  ‘mouths’
los-yal  ~ los-o  *los-o-ya  ‘peanuts’
mis-yal  ~ mis-o  *mis-o-ya  ‘tables’
ilbab-yal  ~ ilbaaβ-o  *ilbaaβ-o-ya  ‘doors’
loy-yal  ~ loy-o  *loy-o-ya  ‘cows’
wel-yal  ~ wel-o  *wel-o-ya  ‘calves’
far-yal  ~ far-o  *far-o-ya  ‘fingers’
nal-yal  ~ nal-o  *nal-o-ya  ‘lights’
deb-yal  ~ deβ-o  *deβ-o-ya  ‘fires’
rok-yal  ~ roγ-o  *roγ-o-ya  ‘rugs’
ʃawel-yal  ~ ʃawel-o  *ʃawel-o-ya  ‘tigers’
kaal-yal  ~ kaal-o  *kaal-o-ya  ‘spoons’
ber-yal  ~ beer-o  *beer-o-ya  ‘livers’
hambal-yal  ~ hambal-o  *hambal-o-ya  ‘leaves’

One noun with this pattern has a -ya form and two -o forms, reflecting variability in the final consonant:

(26)  
didin-yal  ~ didiŋ-o/didiŋ-o  *didiŋ-o-ya/didiŋ-o-ya  ‘turtles’

A number of other C-final nouns have all three plural forms:

(27)  
kitab-yal  ~ kitaβ-o  ~ kitaβ-o-ya  ‘books’
gember-yal  ~ gember-o  ~ gember-o-ya  ‘chairs’
kop-yal  ~ koβ-o  ~ koβ-o-ya  ‘shoes’
yahas-yal  ~ yahas-o  ~ yahas-o-ya  ‘crocodiles’
sawar-yal  ~ sawar-o  ~ sawar-o-ya  ‘pictures’
nardʒim-yal  ~ nardʒim-o  ~ nardʒim-o-ya  ‘coconuts’
bawur-yal  ~ bawur-o  ~ bawur-o-ya  ‘cars’
bur-yal  ~ bur-o  ~ bur-o-ya  ‘mountains’
fur-yal  ~ fur-o  ~ fur-o-ya  ‘keys’
mimin-yal  ~ mimim-o  ~ mimim-o-ya  ‘houses’
iyar-yal  ~ iyar-o  ~ iyar-o-ya  ‘sons’
irbit-yal  ~ irbiŋ-o  ~ irbiŋ-o-ya  ‘needles’

An interesting minimal pair arises between ‘belts’ and ‘poisons’:

(28)  
sun-yal  *sun-o  ~ sum-o-ya  ‘belts’
*sun-yal  ~ sun-o  *sum-o-ya  ‘poisons’

One C-final noun has only a -ya form:

(29)  
kop-yal  *koβ-o  *koβ-o-ya  ‘cups’

One C-final noun lacks the -ya form but has -o and -o-ya forms. This may be due to semantics (see next section).

(30)  
*deγ-yal  deγ-o  ~ deγ-o-ya  ‘ears’
Another C-final noun lacks both the -yal and -o-yal forms:

(31) *basbas-yal basbas-o *basbas-o-yal ‘peppers’

Summary

Even for individuals, the patterns of plural marking are very complex and exhibit some arbitrariness and variability.

However, an empirically adequate analysis is available for each speaker’s patterns.

If all of the speakers’ plural forms were pooled together, the resulting dataset would be incoherent and self-contradicting.

3.2 Semantics of plural forms

(32) Group discussion of ‘houses’

MP: How would you say, um, houses?
AM: Minim-o.
LJ: Minim-o.
JA: (laughs)
BM: (laughs)
AM: Ama minin-yal.
BM: Minim-o.
HM: Minim-o.
LJ: Minim-o.
BM: Minin-yal… (explains in Maay)
MP: Did you say there’s another way to say it, too?
AM: Minin-yal, our houses.
JA: (laughs)
MP: What is the difference between…
HM: But minim-o and minin-yal is… (explains in Maay)
LJ: Ah.
MP: Is what?
LJ: Minim-o.
HM: Minin-yal and minim-o.
LJ: Min… minin-yal.
HM: But minim-o is like, when we’re talking about houses…
AM: It’s, like, our houses.
HM: But no, houses, plus internal. You’re talking general houses.

MP: OK.
HM: Minim-o is just houses.
MP: OK.
JA: (laughs)
AM: Minin-yal.
HM and LJ (in unison): Minin-yal is houses.
MP: Houses.
HM: Yeah.
MP: So does that mean something different from minim-o?
HM: It… it sounds… to us it sounds different. Because, like, when we’re talking minim-o, we’re talking about in or out.
AM: Like, uh, we, like, us, we are of here, so we are talking about our houses, minim-o.
HM: In or out, minim-o, it’s general in or out.
AM: But when we say minin-yal, it’s just houses.
HM: Yeah. For example, if I say minim-o, I’m talking about this house plus rooms plus anything inside.
AM: Mm hmm. OK. Whereas if you say minin-yal?
AM: Houses.
HM: Yeah, it’s houses, just general, at the top, just houses, all houses.
MP: OK… OK.

Glosses in quotes are translations speakers gave directly; glosses in parentheses are clarifications given by the speakers, which are paraphrased in some cases.

Group session with HJ, HM, AM, BM, JA, LJ (translations mainly from HM)

(33) minin ‘house’
minim-o ‘houses; general’ (including inside the houses)
minin-yal ‘houses; all (the) houses; general’
mukulal ‘cat’
mukulaal-o ‘(these) cats (you can see them)’
mukulal-yal ‘cats (in the past or elsewhere)’
Speaker HJ
(34) ey ‘dog’ nal (one) ‘light’
ey-o ‘dogs’ (far away) nal-o ‘half the lights’ (e.g. in this building)
ey-yal ‘many dogs’ (you can see them) nal-yal ‘all the lights’
ey-o-yal ‘dogs’ (many) nal-o-yal ‘many lights; general’
ey-yal-o ‘a few dogs’ (2-3); ‘many dogs’
ey-yal-ki ‘the dogs’ (more than 2)
geet ‘tree’
geeð-o ‘some trees; part of the forest’ or ‘all the trees in the forest’
geet-yal ‘more than two trees’
geeð-o-yal ‘some trees’ or ‘all the trees in the forest; general’

Speaker HA
(35) far ‘finger’ (finger or toe) nal (one) ‘light’
far-o ‘fingers’ nal-o ‘lights’ (2 or more)
far-yal ‘fingers, all together’ nal-yal ‘lights; general’
far-o-yal ‘fingers; general’ (on everyone) nal-o-yal ‘lights’
minij ‘house’ mukulal ‘cat’
minim-o ‘houses’ (large or small number) mukulal-o ‘cats’ (many)
minin-yal ‘houses’ (all the houses) mukulal-yal ‘cats; general’ (all cats)
minin-o-yal ‘houses’ *mukulal-o-yal

dɛk ‘ear’ il ‘eye’
dɛɣ-o ‘ears’ (can be my 2 ears) il-o ‘eyes’ (2)
dɛɣ-yal ‘ears’ (can’t be my 2 ears) il-yal ‘eyes’ (many)
dɛɣ-o-yal ‘ears’ il-o-yal ‘eyes’ (everyone’s)

Speaker AM
(36) far ‘finger’ (finger or toe) nal (one) ‘light’
far-o ‘fingers’ nal-o ‘lights’
far-yal ‘fingers; general’ (on everyone) nal-yal ‘lights; general’
*far-o-yal

Speaker BM
(37) far ‘finger’ (finger or toe)
faar-o ‘all the fingers on a hand’
far-yal ‘all fingers on a body’ (hands & feet)
far-o-yal ‘all the fingers; general’ or ‘all of everyone’s fingers’ [I’m not sure why the stem V is short here]
geet ‘tree’
geeð-o ‘some trees’ or ‘all the trees’ (you can see them)
geeð-yal ‘trees’ (2 or more) or ‘all the trees’ (may not be able to see them)
geeð-o-yal ‘many, many trees’
luk ‘foot’
luy-o ‘feet’
luk-yal ‘feet’ (exactly the same as luyo)
luy-o-yal ‘many, many feet’
**3.3 Lengthening and shortening processes**

SNA=short in citation form, non-alternating; LNA=long in citation form, non-alternating; SA=short in citation form, alternating; LA=long in citation form, alternating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(39)</th>
<th>Speaker BM</th>
<th>Speaker AM</th>
<th>Speaker HA</th>
<th>Speaker HJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘fire’</td>
<td>dep SNA</td>
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<td>dep SNA</td>
<td>dep SNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-C</td>
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<td>pre-V</td>
<td>deβ-o-yal-ki</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘ear’</td>
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<td>děγ-o</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table represents the linguistic structure of some words in a specific dialect or language. Each cell contains the pre- and pre-verbal elements, as well as the corresponding SNA and det-SNA forms.
‘market’ --- suuk LA suk SA ---
pre-C suk-yal suk-yal
pre-V suuy-o suuy-o

‘liver’ --- ber SA --- beer LNA
pre-C ber-kanŋ beer-yal
pre-V beer-o beer-o

‘garden’ ber SA ber SA beer LNA beer LNA
pre-C ber-yal ber-yaŋ beer-yal beer-yal
pre-V beer-o beer-o beer-o

‘hippo’ d3er SA d3er SA d3eer LNA d3eer LNA
pre-C d3er-yal-ŋ d3er-yal d3eer-yal d3eer-yal
pre-V d3eer-o-ŋi d3eer-o d3eer-o d3eer-o

‘table’ --- mis SA --- miis LNA miis LNA
pre-C mis-yal miis-yal miis-key
pre-V miis-o miis-o miis-o

‘book’ buuk LA buk SA buk SA buuk LNA
pre-C buk-yal-ŋi buk-yal buk-yal buug-yal
pre-V buuy-o buuy-o buuy-o

‘belt’ --- suŋ SA suŋ SA --- suŋ SNA
pre-C sun-yal sun-yal sun-yal
pre-V suum-o suum-o suum-o

Speaker BM
SNA and SA are short; LNA and LA are long.

(40) Vowels are shortened before non-coronal consonant + C-initial suffix
V → [-long] / ___ C + C
   [-coronal]

(41) Non-high vowels are lengthened before non-lateral sonorant consonant + V-initial suffix
V → [+long] / ___ C + V
   [-high] [+sonorant] [-lateral]

Speaker AM
SNA and SA are short; LNA and LA are long

(42) Back vowels are shortened before C + C-initial suffix
V → [-long] / ___ C + C
   [+back]

(43) Vowels are lengthened before C + V-initial suffix
V → [+long] / ___ C + V

SNA words (mostly body parts?) are lexically indicated as not undergoing lengthening.

Speaker HA
SNA is short; LNA and SA are long; no LA.
Back vowels are shortened in a closed syllable
\[
V \rightarrow [\text{long}] / \_ \_ C \left\{ + \ C \right\} \#
\]

HA has no lengthening rule.

**Speaker HJ**
SNA is short; LNA is long; no LA or SA. HJ has no lengthening or shortening rules.

**Summary**
Speakers differ in terms of the underlying forms of roots, the presence of lengthening and/or shortening rules, and the precise formulation of the triggers and targets of the rules.

Simply looking at tokens of these nouns as produced by the speech community as a whole would be fruitless. The patterns for a given noun would seem completely random, and the systematicity of the individuals' grammars would be completely obscured. Considering individuals’ patterns separately allows each one to be analyzed in a much more straightforward way.

4. Conclusion
We have seen how inter-speaker variation in Maay in the domains of morphology, semantics, and phonology can be understood by considering each speaker’s individual grammar.

This approach may be especially useful in studying languages in refugee communities, where social upheaval and geographic movement may give rise to significant variability and instability in the language. I suggest, however, that this can be a useful way to study inter-speaker variation in any language, regardless of the social situation.

**Appendix**
(45) Group discussion of ‘cats’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MP</th>
<th>How would you say cats?</th>
<th>MP: OK, so if it’s these cats, specific cats would be mukulal-o, and if it’s just cats in general that’s…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LJ</td>
<td>Mukulal-yal</td>
<td>JA: Mukulal-yal. Mukulal-o. (laughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>Mukulal-yal… (says something to LJ in Maay)</td>
<td>AM: Mukulal-o… (says something to JA in Maay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LJ</td>
<td>(says something to JA in Maay)</td>
<td>JA: (says something to AM in Maay)… mukulal-yal… (says something to AM in Maay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Can you also say mukulal-o?</td>
<td>MP: OK. What did he say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Mukulal-o, yes, the cats, yeah.</td>
<td>AM: That’s just what he’s saying. Mukulal-o is a present, they’re over here, a lot of cats right here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td>HM: Where you see them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Cats? OK.</td>
<td>JA: (laughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Mukulal-o.</td>
<td>MP: OK, OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>And does that mean… how would you describe…</td>
<td>AM: Mukulal-yal, it’s just, you’re talking the past, mukulal-yal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>Mukulal-yl is just like the cats. Mukulal-o is just when they’re over here with you, present, mukulal-yal, mukulal-o [ye] mukulal-yal.</td>
<td>JA: (laughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LJ</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>Mukulal. Mukulal-yl-ki.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**