

**ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2**  
**PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSIONS**  
**FOR ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE OF ISO/IEC 10646<sup>1</sup>.**

Please fill all the sections A, B and C below.

Please read Principles and Procedures Document (P & P) from <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/principles.html> for guidelines and details before filling this form.

Please ensure you are using the latest Form from <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/summaryform.html>.

See also <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/roadmaps.html> for latest Roadmaps.

**A. Administrative**

1. Title:	Proposal for encoding the Somali Osmanya Script Special Vowels in the UCS		
2. Requester's name:	Yuusuf Nuur Cosmann, Somali-Danish author, publisher and promoter of Somali cultural heritage through various platforms (The Society for Somali Language & Literature)		
3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution):	Expert contribution		
4. Submission date:	May 15, 2025		
5. Requester's reference (if applicable):			
6. Choose one of the following:			
This is a complete proposal:	Yes		
(or) More information will be provided later:			

**B. Technical – General**

1. Choose one of the following:			
a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters):		Yes	
Proposed name of script:	Somali Osmanya script umlaut vowels		
b. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block:		Yes	
Name of the existing block:	Somali Osmanya script vowels		
2. Number of characters in proposal:		Ten	
3. Proposed category (select one from below - see section 2.2 of P&P document):			
A-Contemporary	B.1-Specialized (small collection)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B.2-Specialized (large collection)
C-Major extinct	D-Attested extinct		E-Minor extinct
F-Archaic Hieroglyphic or Ideographic			G-Obscure or questionable usage symbols
4. Is a repertoire including character names provided?			
a. If YES, are the names in accordance with the "character naming guidelines" in Annex L of P&P document?			Yes
b. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?			Yes
5. Fonts related:			
a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font to the Project Editor of 10646 for publishing the standard?			
Yuusuf Nuur Cosmann			
b. Identify the party granting a license for use of the font by the editors (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.):			
Yuusuf Nuur Cosmann, Flat 104, 38 South Way, HA9 0QE, UK, ajob1@gmail.com			
6. References:			
a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided?			
b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of proposed characters attached?			
7. Special encoding issues:			
Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing (if applicable) such as input, presentation, sorting, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (if yes please enclose information)?			
No			

**8. Additional Information:**

Submitters are invited to provide any additional information about Properties of the proposed Character(s) or Script that will assist in correct understanding of and correct linguistic processing of the proposed character(s) or script. Examples of such properties are: Casing information, Numeric information, Currency information, Display behaviour information such as line breaks, widths etc., Combining behaviour, Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default Collation behaviour, relevance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibility equivalence and other Unicode normalization related information. See the Unicode standard at <http://www.unicode.org> for such information on other scripts. Also see Unicode Character Database ( <http://www.unicode.org/reports/tr44/> ) and associated Unicode Technical Reports for information needed for consideration by the Unicode Technical Committee for inclusion in the Unicode Standard.

<sup>1</sup> Form number: N4502-F (Original 1994-10-14; Revised 1995-01, 1995-04, 1996-04, 1996-08, 1999-03, 2001-05, 2001-09, 2003-11, 2005-01, 2005-09, 2005-10, 2007-03, 2008-05, 2009-11, 2011-03, 2012-01)

### C. Technical - Justification

1. Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before?	No
If YES explain	
2. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)?	Yes
If YES, with whom?	The Society for Somal Language & Literature has been in contact with a great number of experts
If YES, available relevant documents:	Number of books and articles has been also published for a complete the Somali Osmanya script (see appendix D).
3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included?	Yes
Reference:	
4. The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare)	Common
Reference:	
5. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?	Yes
If YES, where? Reference:	Please see Appendix E
6. After giving due considerations to the principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?	No
If YES, is a rationale provided?	
If YES, reference:	
7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?	No
8. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?	No
If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?	
If YES, reference:	
9. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?	No
If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?	
If YES, reference:	
10. Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to, or could be confused with, an existing character?	No
If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?	
If YES, reference:	
11. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences?	No
If YES, is a rationale for such use provided?	
If YES, reference:	
Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided?	
If YES, reference:	
12. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?	No
If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)	
13. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility characters?	No
If YES, are the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic characters identified?	
If YES, reference:	

## 1. Introduction

The Somali Osmanya script, *ሒፍ ግጥም* far Soomaali ‘Somali writing’ or *ሃገሪያዊ ፍጥረት*, Cismaaniya, a writing system developed in the early 20th century by Osman Yusuf Kenadid, remains an important part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Somali people. Although the Latin script is the official writing system of the Somali language, the Osmanya script continues to hold historical and academic significance. While the script has been almost fully encoded in the Unicode Standard (U+10480–U+104AF) (see appendix A), it lacks some encoding support for linguistic needs, including important diacritics required for full representation of the Somali.

This proposal seeks to address these gaps, completes the standardisation process of the Osmanya script under ISO guidelines (see appendix B) and requests formal recognition of the remaining Osmanya script by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). This effort will ensure the script's adaptability its consistent encoding, and digital usability worldwide.

## 2. Background and Justification

## 2.1 Historical and Cultural Significance

The Osmanya script is a vital part of Somali cultural identity, representing a unique effort to create a writing system tailored to the phonological and grammatical needs of the Somali language. Its historical use in literature, poetry, and administrative documents underscores its importance as a cultural artifact.

The Goosanka Committee and the Development of the Somali Script, Somali Youth League (SYL) was founded in 1949 by Yasiin Cismaan Keenadiid. The organisation taught the Somali script to many people during the 1950s and 1960s — it is estimated that around 60,000 people learned to read and write using the script during that period. Afterwards, even more people continued to learn it until 1969, when its teaching was stopped. The military government at that time discontinued the teaching of the script.

Our group started in 2019 with the aim of reintroducing the Somali script to the Somali community through online education. As of 2025, we estimate that about 10,000 people are now familiar with the script.

## 2.2 Current Limitations

The Osmanya script, consists of 41 letters and one character, apostrophe (see appendix C). As currently encoded in Unicode (see appendix A), lacks support for certain phonetic and orthographic features required for modern Somali. These include 10 Somali umlaut vowels that change the sound and meaning of the letter (see appendix F), below examples.

- Additional characters for representing dialectal variations.
- Diacritics for tone marking or phonetic distinctions.

$S = a,$	$\text{ፊ}$	
$L = e,$	$\text{ከ}$	
$g = i,$	$\text{ባ}$	
$h = o,$	$\text{ከ}$	
$a = u,$	$\text{ሐ}$	
$G = aa,$	$\text{ኧ}$	
$U = ee,$	$\text{ሀ}$	
$E = ii,$	$\text{ይ}$	
$m = oo,$	$\text{ማ}$	
$x = uu,$	$\text{ኧ}$	

The 10 vowels always existed, however due to previous technical constraints, the vowels were bolded (see appendix E) either by hand/typewriting to highlight its distinction and emphasises (umlaut vowels). Since then, the umlaut vowels became widely used after True Type made it easy to use full Osmanya script, including umlaut vowels in our keyboard via Word documents. However, we face a challenge: 10 vowel characters are missing from the Windows operating system. Although we do have access to fonts that can be used in Microsoft Office — which do include all the script's characters including the 10 key vowels — these fonts are limited to Office applications only.

### 2.3 Need for Standardisation

Standardising umlaut vowels of the Osmanya script through ISO will:

- Enhance its usability for modern linguistic and technological applications.
- Facilitate its adoption in digital and print media.
- Preserve and promote the script as a living part of Somali culture.
- Ensure compatibility with global standards for writing systems.

### 3. Objectives of the Proposal

This proposal aims to:

1. Establish a comprehensive ISO standard completion for the Osmanya script by adding 10 umlaut vowels.
2. Expand and refine the Unicode character set for full digital representation.
3. Ensure consistent application of the script across various digital and print platforms.
4. Promote the preservation and study of the Somali linguistic heritage.

### 4. Justification

The standardisation of the Osmanya script is crucial for:

- **Linguistic Importance:** 10 Somali umlaut vowels are missing in the current Unicode. Somali umlaut vowels are crucial for word pronunciations to understand its meaning.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Somali scholars and cultural institutions seek to document and preserve indigenous scripts.
- **Academic Research:** Linguists and historians require a well-defined standard for studying and transcribing historical texts.
- **Digital Implementation:** Incomplete encoding limits the use of Osmanya in software, communication platforms, and educational materials.
- **International Recognition:** An official ISO standard would enhance global awareness and usability of the script.

### 5. Proposed Actions

To achieve the completion of the Osmanya script standardisation, the following steps are proposed:

1. **Expand Character Set:** We've conducted a linguistic and typographic study to identify any missing characters or diacritics required for complete representation.

- 2. **Refine Encoding Guidelines:** Work with Unicode Consortium and ISO experts to align Osmanyaa encoding with modern typographic and digital requirements.
- 3. **Engage Stakeholders:** Collaborate with Somali linguistic scholars, cultural institutions, and ISO working groups to validate proposed standards.
- 4. **Publish and Promote the Standard:** Ensure widespread dissemination and adoption of the completed standard through official ISO publications and outreach efforts.

Code	Glyph	Description
U+00e1	Š	
U+00E9	Ł	
U+00ED	Ĝ	
U+00F3	ħ	
U+00FA	Ĥ	
U+00c3	Ç	
U+00cb	Ü	
U+00ef	Ė	
U+00f6	Ħ	
U+00fc	ĥ	

6. Expected Outcomes

- A fully recognised ISO standard for the Somali Osmanyaa scrip.
- Completed an improved digital accessibility and usability.
- Increased scholarly interest and cultural awareness of the script.
- Enhanced linguistic diversity within international digital communication.

7. Conclusion

The completion of the ISO standardisation process for the Somali Osmanyaa script will significantly contribute to the preservation of Somali linguistic heritage, academic research, and digital inclusivity. This initiative aligns with global efforts to document and standardise lesser-known scripts, fostering linguistic diversity in the digital age. We respectfully request ISO's collaboration and consideration in finalising this standard to ensure the full and accurate representation of the Osmanyaa script.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Current Unicode Encoding of Osmanya Script

Row 104: OSMANYA

	1048	1049	104A
0	ø	l	O
1	ʝ	ɓ	ʃ
2	ɔ	ɛ	ɛ
3	ɪ	ʏ	ɸ
4	ʌ	ɥ	ɔ
5	ʁ	ɛ	ɛ
6	O	S	y
7	7	l	J
8	ɔ	9	C
9	ɔ	h	U
A	ɔ	ɪ	
B	ɔ	ɔ	
C	ʌ	U	
D	ɔ	h	
E	ʃ		
F	ʃ		

G = 00

P = 01

dec	hex	Name
80		OSMANYA LETTER ALEF
81		OSMANYA LETTER BA
82		OSMANYA LETTER TA
83		OSMANYA LETTER JA
84		OSMANYA LETTER XA
85		OSMANYA LETTER KHA
86		OSMANYA LETTER DEEL
87		OSMANYA LETTER RA
88		OSMANYA LETTER SA
89		OSMANYA LETTER SHIIN
8A		OSMANYA LETTER DHA
8B		OSMANYA LETTER CAYN
8C		OSMANYA LETTER GA
8D		OSMANYA LETTER FA
8E		OSMANYA LETTER QAAF
8F		OSMANYA LETTER KAAF
90		OSMANYA LETTER LAAN
91		OSMANYA LETTER MIIN
92		OSMANYA LETTER NUUN
93		OSMANYA LETTER WAW
94		OSMANYA LETTER HA
95		OSMANYA LETTER YA
96		OSMANYA LETTER A
97		OSMANYA LETTER E
98		OSMANYA LETTER I
99		OSMANYA LETTER O
9A		OSMANYA LETTER U
9B		OSMANYA LETTER AA
9C		OSMANYA LETTER EE
9D		OSMANYA LETTER OO
9E		(This position shall not be used)
9F		(This position shall not be used)
A0		OSMANYA DIGIT ZERO
A1		OSMANYA DIGIT ONE
A2		OSMANYA DIGIT TWO
A3		OSMANYA DIGIT THREE
A4		OSMANYA DIGIT FOUR
A5		OSMANYA DIGIT FIVE
A6		OSMANYA DIGIT SIX
A7		OSMANYA DIGIT SEVEN
A8		OSMANYA DIGIT EIGHT
A9		OSMANYA DIGIT NINE
AA		(This position shall not be used)
AB		(This position shall not be used)
AC		(This position shall not be used)
AD		(This position shall not be used)
AE		(This position shall not be used)
AF		(This position shall not be used)

- Appendix B: Proposed Character Additions and Revisions

Code	Glyph	Description
U+00e1	Š	
U+00E9	Ł	
U+00ED	Ė	
U+00F3	ħ	
U+00FA	Ħ	
U+00c3	Ç	
U+00cb	Ĭ	
U+00ef	Ĳ	
U+00f6	Ĳ	
U+00fc	Ĳ	

- Appendix C: Complete Osmanya Alphabets

The Society for Somali Language and Literature

ʝ	ɔ	ɪ	ʏ	ʌ	O	7
ɔ	ɛ	ɓ	ʃ	ʌ	ɔ	ʃ
ʃ	ʌ	ɓ	ɔ	ɔ	ʌ	ɛ
S	l	9	h	ʌ		
Ç	U	ɛ	h	ʌ		
Š	Ł	Ė	ħ	Ħ		
Ç	Ĭ	Ĳ	Ĳ	Ĳ		

These 10 vowels

are missing in the

Somali Latin

alphabet

Figure 1: Cosmann, Y., 2024. The Ten Vowels. In: 1st, ed. ʝS7h ʟS7 ɔhɔɔɔɔ: ʟɔɔɔɔɔɔ ʃhʃS2 (Baro Far Somali: Tusmooyin Kooban). London: s.n., p. 3.

- Appendix D: Books, Magazines and Articles

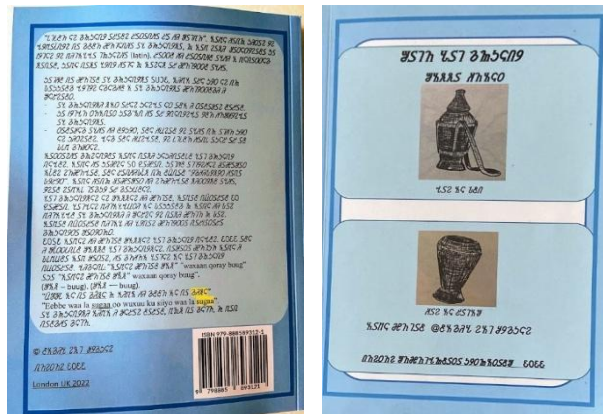


Figure 2: Cosmann, Y., 2022. *Baro Far Somali* (Baro Far Somali). London: s.n.



Figure 3: *Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta Soomaalida: buug koowaad, 1971. (Afkeenna iyo Fartiisa: Our language and its handwriting: book one)*. 1st ed. Xamar: s.n.

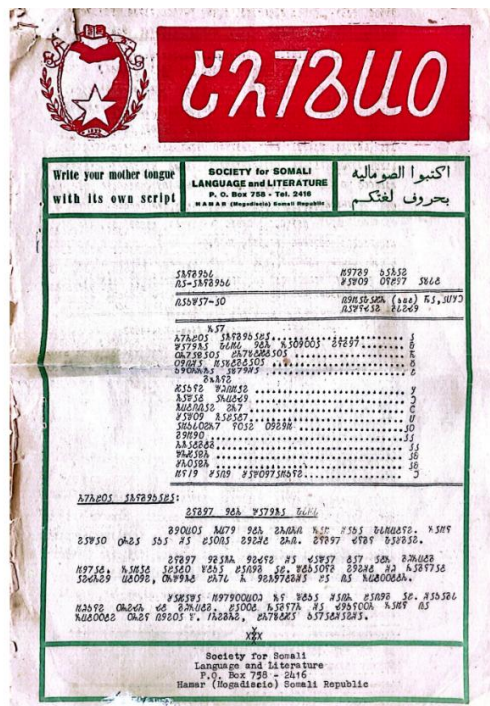


Figure 4: Magan, H. & Afey, A. D., 1967. *Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta (The Society for The Somali Language and Literature)*. *h78 L0/HORSEED*, Issue 11, p. 1.



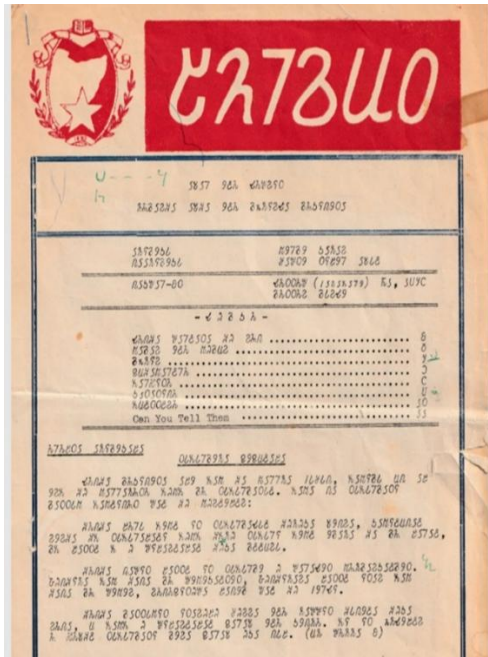


Figure 5: Magan, H. & Afey, A. D., 1968. Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta (The Society for The Somali Language and Literature). *h78 LO/HORSEED*), Issue 20, p. 1.

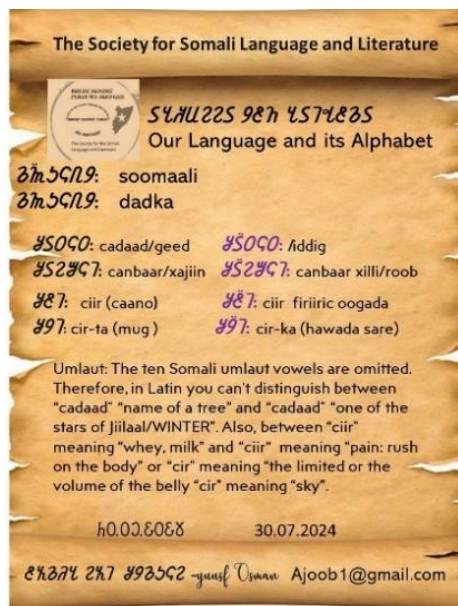


Figure 6: Cosman, Y. N., 2024. Ten Umlaut Vowels. *Our Language and Its Alphabets*, 30 July, p. 3.



- Appendix E: Bolded instead of umlaut vowels

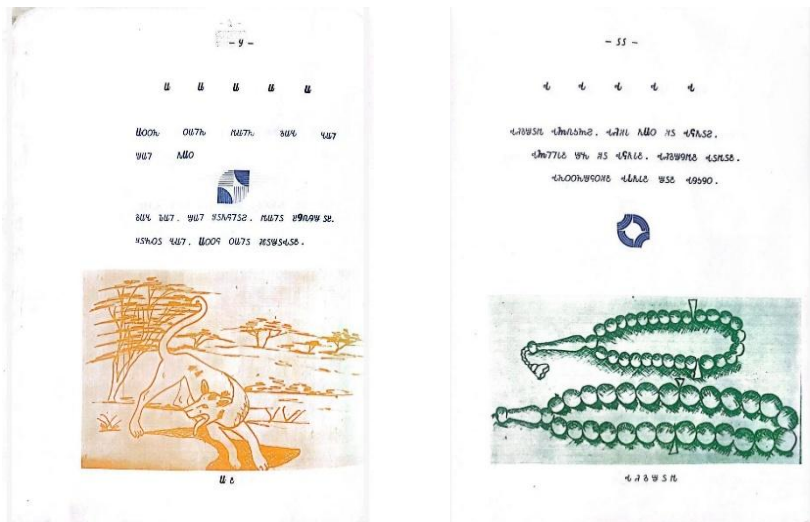


Figure 7: *ጸኑሰላሳ ምላሽ ዓይኑ ጸኑሰላሳ ጸኑሰላሳ: ምላሽ ዓይኑ ጸኑሰላሳ* [Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta Soomaalida, 1971. EE iyo T. In: Afkeenna iyo Fartiisa: Buug Koowaad ('Our language and its handwriting: book one')]. Xamar: s.n., p. 9 & 55.

- Appendix F: The ten Somali umlaut vowels are omitted

Here are some examples of several nouns and their different sounds.

Example

Feer/ **፻፲፯**: punch, feer/ **፻፲፯**: rib).  
 (fool/ **፻፲፯**: font tooth, fool/ **፻፲፯**: pain..),  
 (gar/ **፻፲፯**: beard, gar/ **፻፲፯**: justice),  
 (gees/ **፻፲፯**: horn, gees/ **፻፲፯**: side),  
 inan/ **፻፲፯**: boy, inan/ **፻፲፯**: girl,  
 (qaar/ **፻፲፯**: some, qaar/ **፻፲፯**: stick),  
 (sug/ **፻፲፯**: wait, sug/ **፻፲፯**: check),  
 (taag/ **፻፲፯**: hight ground, taag/ **፻፲፯**: powe),  
 (tuug/ **፻፲፯**: thief, tuug/ **፻፲፯**: beg),  
 (tuur/ **፻፲፯**: hair, tuur/ **፻፲፯**: hunch),  
 (xoor/ **፻፲፯**: badger, xoor/ **፻፲፯**: fresh/milk),  
 (waa/ **፻፲፯**: time, waa/ **፻፲፯**: assist word),  
 (weer/ **፻፲፯**: hyena, weer/ **፻፲፯**: sentence word),

Figure 8: Laitin, D. D., 1977. *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience*. 1st ed. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

#### Contact Information:

The Society for Somali Language & Literature  
 Mr. Yuusuf Nuur Cosmann  
 ajoob1@gmail.com

We look forward to ISO's review and guidance on this important linguistic initiative.

### **About the Requester:**

**Yuusuf Nuur Cosmann** is a Somali-Danish author, publisher, and cultural researcher dedicated to preserving and promoting Somali language, literature, and history. He is the director of the East African Information and Research Centre (EAIRC), a UK-registered organization active since 2005.

Mr. Cosmann has authored and published several significant books in Somali, focusing on language, script, and cultural heritage:

- **Baro Far Somali: Learn Somali Alphabet (2024)**

A comprehensive guide to learning the Osmanya script, an indigenous Somali alphabet developed in the early 20th century. The book includes exercises, illustrations, and phonetic explanations to aid learners.

- **Sooyaalka Qoraalka Far Soomaaliga (2024)**

This work delves into the history of Somali writing systems, including the Osmanya, Arabic-based, and Latin scripts. It provides insights into the development and significance of these scripts in Somali history.

- **Kaftandhable: Soomaaliya Maxaa Dheeliyey (2024)**

A satirical and critical examination of Somali political leadership from 1960 to 1994, offering reflections on governance and societal challenges during that period.

- **Cismaan Yuusuf Keenadiid: Gabayo, Geerro, Jiiftooyin (2024)**

A curated collection of poems and literary works by Osman Yusuf Keenadiid, the creator of the Osmanya script. The book also provides historical context about the script's development and its role in Somali nationalism.

- **Baro Af Soomaali (Learn Somali Language) (2015)**

An introductory resource for individuals seeking to learn the Somali language, tailored for beginners, particularly Somali children and youths in the Diaspora, as well as non-Somali speakers eager to delve into the language. Barnes & Noble