

PUBLICATIONS

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REFUGEE WORK (LADO)

I am a professional academic linguist, having worked for nearly 40 years in departments of Linguistics in Canada, Tanzania, Kenya, and Europe, including a two-year spell as Associate Professor of Swahili Dialectology at the Institute of Swahili Research in Dar es Salaam. I specialize in African languages and historical and dialect Swahili in particular. I spent hundreds of hours doing fieldwork, including on Bajuni. I lived 12 years in East Africa, including 6 months in the Bajuni area on the NE Kenya coast. I lived in Bajuni villages in northern Kenya, sailed in Bajuni dhows, had Bajuni friends, interviewed many Bajunis. I have published descriptions and analyses of Bajuni, and edited and published dozens of pages of Bajuni stories, songs, and poetry, which are abundant. As far as I know, no other scholar, African or foreign, has done this. I co-authored the standard linguistic history of Swahili and have written descriptions of other Swahili coastal dialects. I have written 12 books and 100 other publications, all on African linguistic topics. See above, or can be verified at <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dnurse/>.

I visited Somalia for one week. I have not lived or worked in Somalia but my field work on Bajuni included extensive interviews with elderly Bajuni males from Somalia. Although it might be said that my Bajuni experience was that of northern Kenya, not southern Somalia. I think that irrelevant, as Bajuni language, villages, culture, dances, clans, fishing habits are homogenous along the whole coast. There is little variation within the Bajuni spoken from Somalia to northern Kenya because, until independence, Bajunis had always travelled and moved freely along “their coast”, maintaining language and ties. “Their coast” stretched from Kismayu, in Somali, south and across the border into northern Kenya, to the islands north of Lamu and the mainland opposite Pate Island, a distance of just over 150 miles/250 kilometres.

I have also read the relevant Bajuni literature by others (Grottanelli (1955), the Joint British-Danish-Dutch Fact-finding Mission report (2000), Landinfo (2003), etc.

Since 2004 I have worked as a linguist on 190 cases from minority Somali groups applying for refugee status. Most were for the Netherlands or the UK, a few for

Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland. One applicant was a Mushunguli from the southern interior of Somalia, three were from Brava, the rest were Bajunis. In all Dutch, UK, and Belgian cases I listened to an official recording and wrote a linguistic analysis of what I heard. In most Dutch and some UK cases I also commented on what the government linguist had written: in some cases this linguist was employed by Sprakab, in other cases by the Dutch government. In some Dutch cases I also listened to and analysed a second, non-official recording. In a few cases the government then responded to what I had said and I wrote a rebuttal of that. In some UK cases I have responded to the government interview record and/or letter of refusal. In the Canadian cases I wrote my report directly for the lawyer representing the applicant, and I understand my report was also read by the judge. In the Belgian and Swiss cases I sent my report to a government agency. In the Dutch cases I send my reports to an agency, which edits and transmits them to the lawyer(s) for the case. Thus far I have had no direct contact with the Dutch lawyers, nor have I been asked to give evidence in court. In the UK cases I have sent my report either to a UK refugee agency or to lawyers acting on behalf of the client. So I have worked “for” and “against” governments.

As a result of 8+ years in Tanzania and 3+ years in Kenya, I am familiar with varieties of Swahili in both countries.