ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2
PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSIONS
FOR ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE OF ISO/IEC 10646[1]
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)   X   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? *Yes*
    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, ajoob1@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.

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[1]. 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, 𐒍𐒖𐒇 𐒓𐒚𐒈𐒛𐒒𐒘 far Soomaali 'Somali writing' or 𐒕𐒘𐒈𐒖𐒋𐒛𐒒𐒘𐒘𐒈, 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.

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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.

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2. **Refine Encoding Guidelines:** Work with Unicode Consortium and ISO experts to align Osmanya 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	Š̆	
U+00E9	l̆	
U+00ED	ǧ	
U+00F3	ℏ	
U+00FA	ả̃	
U+00c3	Ç̃	
U+00cb	Ü̃	
U+00ef	ě̈	
U+00f6	m̈	
U+00fc	ℏ̈	

6. Expected Outcomes

- A fully recognised ISO standard for the Somali Osmanya 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 Osmanya 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 Osmanya script.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Current Unicode Encoding of Osmanya Script

Row 104: OSMANYA

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)

G = 00
P = 01

- Appendix B: Proposed Character Additions and Revisions

Code	Glyph	Description
U+00e1	Š̆	
U+00E9	l̆	
U+00ED	ğ	
U+00F3	ħ	
U+00FA	ā̆	
U+00c3	Ç̆	
U+00cb	Ü̆	
U+00ef	ĕ	
U+00f6	m̃	
U+00fc	ħ̈	

- Appendix C: Complete Osmanya Alphabets

Figure 1: Cosmann, Y., 2024. The Ten Vowels. In: 1st, ed. 𐒁𐒘𐒇𐒈 𐒄𐒘𐒇 𐒁𐒘𐒅𐒋𐒘𐒊 : 𐒂𐒕𐒈𐒑𐒙𐒝𐒘𐒐 𐒌𐒙𐒁𐒖𐒐 (*Baro Far Somali: Tusmooyin Kooban*). London: s.n., p. 3.

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- Appendix D: Books, Magazines and Articles
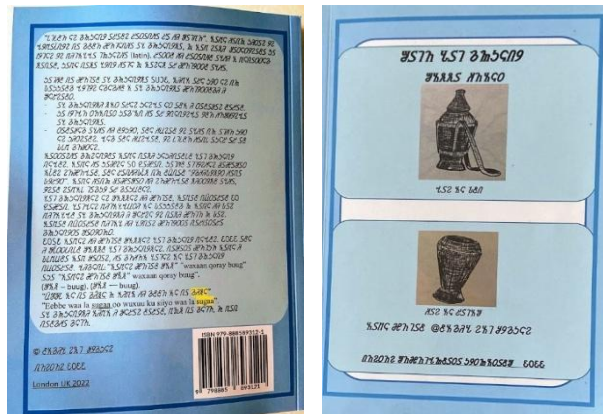
Figure 2: Cosmann, Y., 2022. *𐒁𐒛𐒇𐒙 𐒍𐒛𐒇 𐒈𐒝𐒑𐒛𐒐𐒘* (*Baro Far Somali*). London: s.n.

Figure 3: *𐒘𐒑𐒙𐒈𐒐𐒛𐒈 𐒈𐒛𐒍𐒛 𐒘𐒕𐒙 𐒈𐒚𐒚𐒌𐒛𐒒𐒋𐒛𐒈 𐒈𐒝𐒑𐒛𐒐𐒘𐒊𐒙𐒈,: 𐒈𐒛𐒔𐒚𐒚𐒊𐒈 𐒘𐒕𐒙 𐒍𐒛𐒈𐒐𐒘𐒆𐒈* [Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta Soomaalida: buug koowaad, 1971. (*Afkeenna iyo Fartiisa: Our language and its handwriting: book one)]*. 1st ed. Xamar: s.n.
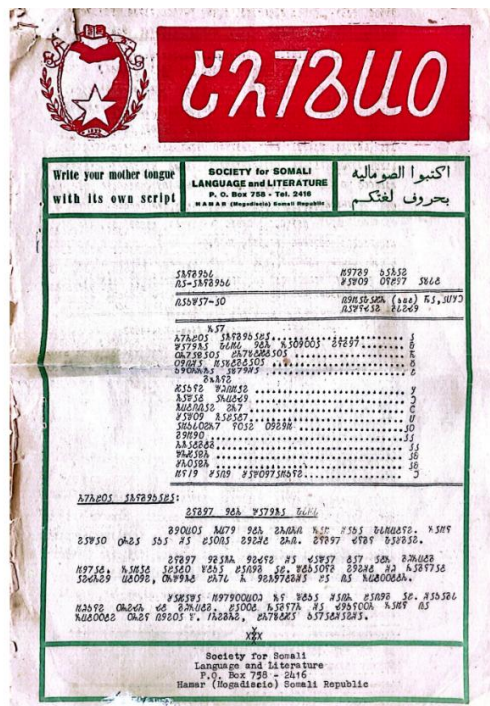

Figure 4: Magan, H. & Afey, A. D., 1967. Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta (The Society for The Somali Language and Literature). 𐒔𐒙𐒇 𐒈𐒉𐒆/HORSEED, Issue 11, p. 1.
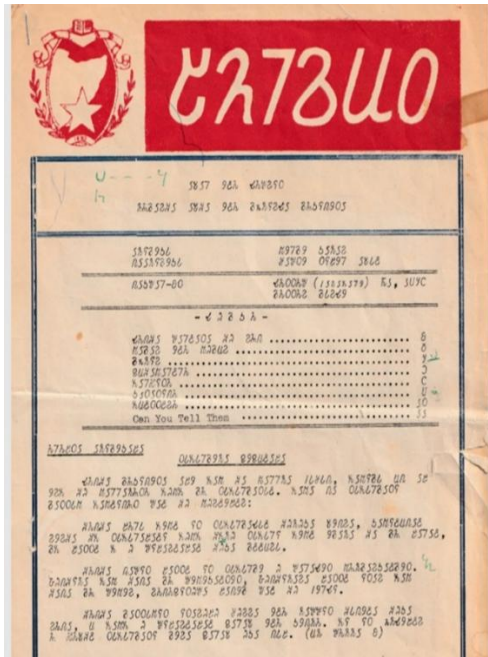
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Figure 5: Magan, H. & Afey, A. D., 1968. Goosanka Afka iyo Suugaanta (The Society for The Somali Language and Literature). 𐒔𐒆𐒁 𐒐𐒖/*HORSEED), Issue 20, p. 1.*
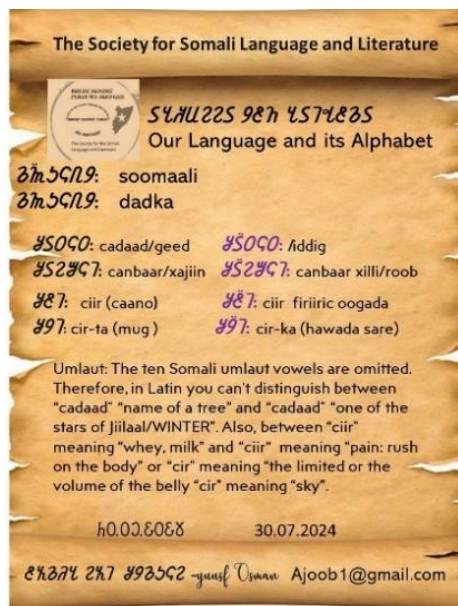

Figure 6: Cosman, Y. N., 2024. Ten Umlaut Vowels. Our Language and Its Alphabets, 30 July, p. 3.
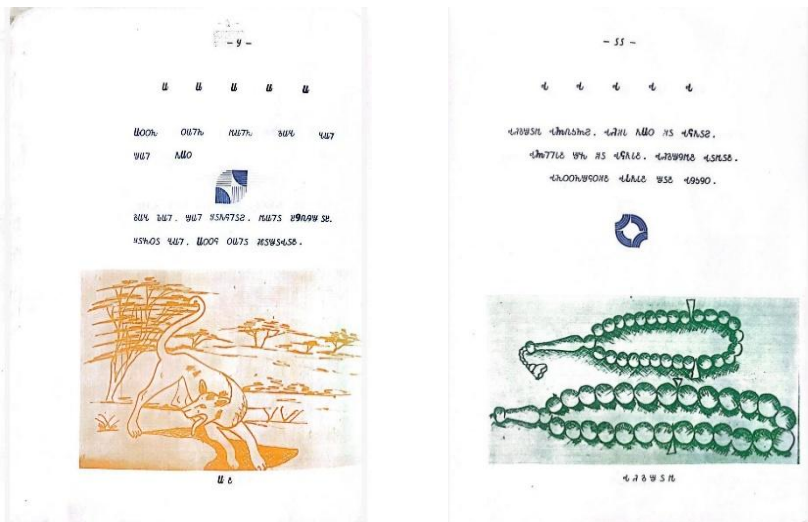
- Appendix E: Bolded instead of umlaut vowels

Figure 7: ꤸ ꤱꤳꤲꤶꤩꤴ ꤱꤼꤩꤴ ꤩꤨ ꤥ ꤳꤷꤸꤤꤶꤩꤴ ꤳꤱꤶꤨꤷꤩꤳꤴꤪ: ꤴꤼꤩꤸꤩꤩꤴ ꤩꤨ ꤥ ꤼꤴꤷꤸ꤬ꤩꤴ
[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/ 𐒔𐒝 𐒇: punch, feer/ 𐒔𐒛 𐒇: rib).
(fool/ 𐒔𐒁𐒅: font tooth, fool/ 𐒔𐒁𐒅: pain..),
(gar/ 𐒌𐒊 𐒇: beard, gar/ 𐒌𐒇 𐒇: justice),
(gees/ 𐒌𐒛 𐒁: horn, gees 𐒌𐒝 𐒁: side),

inan/ 𐒙𐒖𐒈𐒖: boy, inan/ 𐒙𐒖𐒈𐒖: girl,
(qaar/ 𐒎𐒇𐒊 𐒇: some, qaar/ 𐒎𐒇𐒇 𐒇: stick),
(sug/𐒁𐒍𐒋: wait, sug/ 𐒁𐒍𐒋: check),
(taag/ 𐒍𐒊𐒋: hight ground, taag/ 𐒍𐒇𐒋: powe),

(tuug/𐒍𐒄𐒋: thief, tuug/ 𐒍𐒄𐒋: beg),
(tuur/𐒍𐒄 𐒇: hair, tuur 𐒍𐒄 𐒇: hunch),
(xoor/ 𐒅𐒁 𐒇: badger, xoor/ 𐒅𐒁 𐒇: fresh/milk),
(waa/ 𐒄𐒊: time, waa/𐒄𐒇: assist word),
(weer/ 𐒄𐒝 𐒇: hyena, weer/ 𐒄𐒝 𐒇: 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
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We look forward to ISO's review and guidance on this important linguistic initiative.

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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

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