

Chapter 13

The position of Asá and Qwadza within Cushitic

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This paper aims to re-examine lexical data on Asá and Qwadza in order to find out how they relate to each other and to other languages, in particular to the West Rift Southern Cushitic languages and their reconstruction. The data is analyzed on a phonological and morphological level. Some of the phones of the languages are compared in order to find regular sound correspondences, and certain morphemes are compared, providing more insight into common innovations, regarding both the nominal and verbal domain. This paper aims to answer the following research questions: “Are Asá and Qwadza Cushitic languages?” and “Are Asá and Qwadza Southern Cushitic languages forming East Rift Southern Cushitic?”. The findings show that Asá and Qwadza are very likely Cushitic languages, but that there is no evidence for an East Rift Southern Cushitic group based on the evidence presented in this paper.

1 Introduction

The languages this paper is concerned with are Asá and Qwadza. These are two languages that were spoken in Northern Tanzania, but are now extinct. Asá and Qwadza are two languages that are classified together as East Rift Southern Cushitic, as can be seen in Figure 1. According to Blažek (2019), Asá and Qwadza can be classified within Southern Cushitic. Based on his lexicostatistics, Qwadza splits off first, then Asá (Blažek 2019: 44).

Data of these two languages were collected when there were only rememberers of the languages, not active speakers. Speakers of Asá shifted to Maasai, a



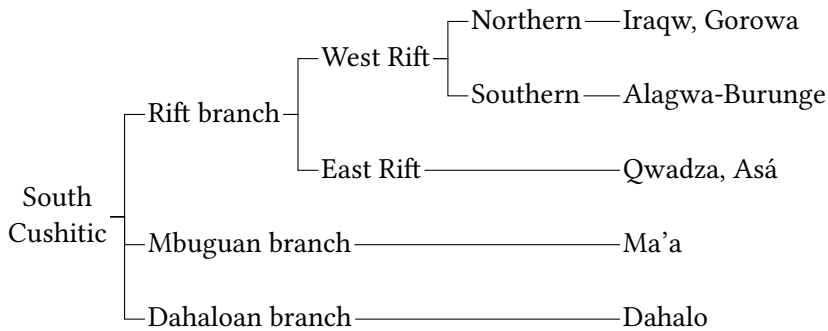


Figure 1: Southern Cushitic (Ehret 1980: 132, adapted)

Nilotic language, and speakers of Qwadza to Gogo, a Bantu language. It is important to keep this situation in mind when looking at the data. After a discussion of the previous research and the data used for this paper, the research questions will be answered. The first research question, “Are Asá and Qwadza Cushitic languages?”, will be addressed in §2 and the second research question, “Are Asá and Qwadza Southern Cushitic languages forming East Rift Southern Cushitic?” in §3. These questions will be answered by looking at the phonological evidence to identify sound correspondences, and by looking at the morphology that is present on the lexemes to compare form, distribution and function. Finally, it is concluded that Asá and Qwadza are very likely Cushitic languages, but that there is no evidence for an East Rift Southern Cushitic group based on the evidence presented in this paper.

1.1 Previous research

Among the oldest sources on Asá is Merker (1904). Merker (1904) contains an ethnographic description and some lexical items. The linguistic data of this source is found in Fleming (1969). Winter (1979) collected much more extensive data from the last speakers of Asá, the language they remember from their youth. This is the data Ehret adapted and used (Ehret 1980). Petrollino & Mous (2010) were the last to collect data on Asá.

The earliest data for Qwadza were collected in 1908 by colonial administrators who, most likely, worked mainly with rememberers, who were shifting to Gogo (Bantu). The two sources, Claus (1910) and Kohl-Larsen (1943) both contain linguistic data. Pearce (1954) contains an unpublished wordlist, which is referred to in Whiteley (1958). Ehret collected data from 1973-74. Lastly, Kießling reports a word list of Qwadza (Kießling 1999). The linguistic data on Qwadza are probably

more reliable in the two earliest collections even though these were collected by non-linguists. The largest collection is Ehret (1974), who was possibly too late to collect reliable data. The same goes for Asá; the data were collected when speakers were shifting languages, and when it was possibly too late for reliable data. This means that the data have to be taken with care.

The Gogo name for the Qwadza people and their clan among the Gogo is Ng'omvia. This is also the name used in the literature, until Ehret uses the name the people use themselves, which is Kw'adza. Variants of that name are currently most used. I will be using Qwadza.

1.2 Data

As mentioned above, it is important to point out that all of the data collection on these languages happened during the shift to another language, or when it was only remembered. In addition, the time period in which data could be collected was fairly short, and data collectors mainly focused on lexical information. Also, it was conducted partly by non-linguists. For Asá, the data consist of 334 lexemes, including derivations. The data are all taken from Ehret (1980). The lexemes in this dataset can be subdivided into several domains: There are around 60 terms for animals, consisting of terms for non-domestic animals and general animal terms, like the word for *du'umok* 'leopard' and terms relating to domestic animals, like *neris* 'to herd, or feed'. There are around 38 words referring to movement, often involving the body. There are 33 nouns denoting body parts and 28 nouns relating to the environment. There is also a category of abstract lexemes, a group of 28 words, including both nouns, like the word *lawala* 'truth', and verbs, like the word *šah-* 'to know'. There are 25 lexemes that refer to cultivating and cooking. There are some 20 lexemes that have to do with hunting, including words relating to honey. There are also some adjectives, quantifiers, numerals, and possessive pronouns.

The Qwadza data consist of 973 lexemes, including derivations. The data are taken from Ehret (1980), Kießling (1999) (unpublished word list) and Kohl-Larsen (1943). There is a large group of general terms (156) relating to animals, and within that group, terms for wild animals, like *tsaayiko* 'weaver bird', but also a group of 38 words relating to domestic animals. There are 100 words for body parts. Just like in Asá, some of the semantic categories concern terms relating to environment (92), cultivating (92) and hunting (25). Qwadza has relatively more words to refer to people or their status (56). Something that is not present in the Asá data, but is present in the Qwadza data, are terms for what people wear, like *daliko* 'women's upper garment'.

2 Are Asá and Qwadza Cushitic languages?

This section examines the evidence there is to classify Asá and Qwadza as Cushitic languages. It has been shown that Asá is a Cushitic language by Fleming (1969). He bases this on the types of lexical items that occur in the languages, showing that lexical items that are not easily borrowed are cognate to other Cushitic languages and showing that such cognates do not exist with Nilotic and Bantu. In addition, Ehret claims Asá and Qwadza are Cushitic languages based on the gender distinctions on nouns. The suffixes are /-k, -g/ for masculine and /-t, -to/ for feminine (Ehret 1980). The fact that these suffixes occur on nouns supports that these are Cushitic languages, since these endings occur in the whole of Cushitic. This argument is explained further in §3.2 in relation to the hypothesis of an East Rift branch. A third argument for considering Asá and Qwadza Cushitic languages is the existence of certain verbal extensions, which is discussed in the following.

Some verbs in Asá and Qwadza seem to have verbal extensions. In particular, there are three formatives that can be identified in both Asá and Qwadza: *-m*, *-t*, and *-s*. They resemble verbal extensions in other Cushitic languages and they are separable from the root when contrasted to similar roots, changing the meaning of the root slightly. The formatives are shown in Table 1. It is not clear if the vowel before the suffixes is actually part of it or not, and no function can be established for these formatives, since only lexical data is available.

Table 1: Verbal formatives

	Asá	Qwadza
<i>-m</i>	<i>'adam</i> 'to see'	<i>sa'im</i> 'burn (intr.)'
<i>-t</i>	<i>ji'it</i> 'to jump, to fly'	<i>tsalahet</i> 'curse'
<i>-s</i>	<i>wa'alis</i> 'to exchange'	<i>tulas</i> 'split in two'

In some instances, the vowel before the formative fully assimilates to the vowel of the stem, suggesting that the vowel before the *-m*, *-t* or *-s* is part of the formative. This assimilation can occur with all vowels and all three formatives, as can be seen in (1)–(2), but it remains unclear what the conditioning of the assimilation is. Compare the examples in Table 1, where the assimilation does not always occur. An explanation for some of the examples would be progressive trans-guttural assimilation, as proposed for Cushitic by Hayward & Hayward (1989). This makes sense in (1)–(2), since the vowel of the formative fully assimilates to the root vowel when a guttural phone is in between. However, it would

not explain why this assimilation does *not* occur in the lexeme *sa'im* ‘burn (intr.)’ in Table 1.

- (1) Asá
 - a. *duhum*
‘to marry’
 - b. *hla'at*
‘to love, to like’
 - c. *hidis*
‘to try, to try out, to prove’
- (2) Qwadza
 - a. *fo'om*
‘bathe’
 - b. *fe'em*
‘measure’

On the basis of the forms of these verbal extensions, they are posed as cognates to the m-suffix, t-suffix, and s-suffix in Cushitic. The m-suffix is cognate to the passive or durative in Cushitic: “The form of the passive is *-am* (Somali, Konso, Dullay, Afar) or *-s(t)* (Khamtanga, Bilin)” (Mous 2020). This suffix is known to have shifted to the meaning of durative in West Rift (Kießling 2000: 14). Although a passive meaning seems to be missing, the presence of this suffix suggests Cushitic membership. The t-suffix is cognate to the middle in Cushitic: “The Cushitic languages with middle derivation in t (or related sounds) include all of East Cushitic (...) and all of the Southern Cushitic languages where there is no productive autobenefactive meaning” (Mous 2014: 77). The s-suffix is cognate to the causative in Cushitic: “the causative is a suffix *-s* or *-sh* preceded by a vowel *i* which is sometimes analysed as epenthetic” (Mous 2020: 3).

3 Do Asá and Qwadza form East Rift Southern Cushitic?

Considering Cushitic membership is proven, the next question is what the sub-classification of Asá and Qwadza is. As has been previously shown, Ehret classifies Asá and Qwadza together in the East Rift branch of Southern Cushitic, based on the gender distinctions on nouns, among others. The suffixes are */-k*, *-g/* and */-t*, *-to/* (Ehret 1980). Although this supports the hypothesis that Asá and Qwadza are Cushitic languages, for these endings occur in the whole of Cushitic, it is not an argument for grouping Asá and Qwadza together. This section aims to

compare phonological and morphological evidence of Asá and Qwadza, and will show that Asá stands further from the West Rift branch of Southern Cushitic than Qwadza does, implying that grouping these languages together might not be the right analysis. §3.1 discusses phonological evidence, §3.2 discusses gender suffixes, and §3.3 discusses verbal suffixes.

3.1 Phonological evidence

Phonological differences and similarities can provide insights into the relatedness of these languages. It is important to keep in mind that the data do not show underlying forms, but merely a transcription of the word. There is far too little morphology on these lexemes to identify phonological alternations. Therefore, the transcribed form is taken as underlying form, and all the phones that are found in the language are included in the phonological inventories.

The cognates in Table 2 show that Asá has a *d* where West Rift and Qwadza have a *tl*. There are not many cognates containing this sound that occur in Asá, Qwadza and Proto-West Rift, but for the ones that were found, this is a consistent sound correspondence, which places Asá further from West Rift than Qwadza. The reconstructed phone for Proto-East Cushitic is **d'* (Kießling & Mous 2003:36), while the reconstructed phone for Proto-Cushitic is **tl* (Mous 2021, personal communication), linking Asá to East Cushitic. This leads to two possible hypotheses: 1. Asá is part of East Cushitic and inherited this sound from Proto-East Cushitic. Or 2. Asá is part of an East Rift branch and underwent the sound change **tl > d*. The first hypothesis involves fewer changes and is therefore more efficient.¹

The same applies to the phones *š* (presumably [ʃ]) and *ts*. Asá has *š* where Qwadza and Proto-West Rift have *ts*, as can be seen in Table 3. This places Asá further from Proto-West Rift and Qwadza. Qwadza and Proto-West Rift, again, have the exact same phone, if the orthographies used are representative of the sounds that were spoken.

There are a few exceptions to this correspondence in the data. These are shown in Table 4. The first row shows that Asá *š* corresponds to West Rift and Qwadza *t*, and the second row shows that Asá *š* corresponds to West Rift *s*. However, even when there is a correspondence between West Rift and Asá, Qwadza can either have a corresponding *c* or *s*, as is shown in the third and fourth row.

Although the following is a small set of cognates, the sound correspondence in Table 5 is completely regular. For these cognates, Qwadza and Proto-West Rift can be grouped together. These languages both have a labialized velar, while Asá

¹Slashes are used to indicate a voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ], as in e.g. **tlaa/a* 'rock' in Table 2.

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Table 2: d ~ tl

d ~ tl	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
root-initial	<i>de'ok</i> 'stone'	<i>tlayiko</i> 'stone'	PWR * <i>tlaa/a</i> 'rock'
	<i>di</i> 'to stink'	-	PWR * <i>tli/</i> 'to stink'
root-final	<i>hud-</i> 'to twist fibers into string or rope'	-	PWR * <i>ʕutl</i> 'plait, braid, weave, knit, twist'
	-	<i>qutl</i> 'cut up'	PWR * <i>quutl</i> 'cut up, cut into pieces'

Table 3: š ~ ts

š ~ ts	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
root-initial	<i>šo'ok</i> 'wind'	<i>tša'u</i> 'cold' ~ <i>tša'uko</i> 'wind'	PWR * <i>tsaaqwa</i> 'cold wind, coldness'
	-	<i>tsaluko</i> 'oryx'	PWR * <i>tsawadu</i> 'water-bucks'
root-internal	<i>hašok</i> 'stick'	-	PWR * <i>xwaytsaa</i> 'switch, flexible stick'
root-final	<i>haš-</i> 'to be full'	<i>hats-umo</i> 'much'	PWR * <i>hats</i> 'to be full'

Table 4: Exceptions

Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
<i>šike'e</i> 'fly'		ALBU * <i>tika/iya</i> 'tsetse fly, tsetse flies'
<i>šada'ak</i> 'buffalo'	-	PWR * <i>sadee/a</i> 'buffalo'
<i>šat</i> 'to cut (down)'	<i>cat</i> 'to cut down'	PWR * <i>tsat</i> 'cut'
<i>šira'a</i> 'bird'	<i>sil</i> 'to pluck a bird'	PWR * <i>tsira/a</i> 'bird'

has a plain velar. Considering Proto Cushitic has **kw*, and Proto East Cushitic has **k*, Asá is more similar to Proto East Cushitic.

Table 5: k/g ~ kw/gw

k/g ~ kw/gw	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
root-internal	<i>daka</i> ‘bad, etc; rotten’	<i>tlakwa</i> ‘bad’	PWR <i>*tlakw</i> ‘bad, wicked’
root-internal	<i>yaga</i> ‘cattle’	<i>yaagwa</i> ~ <i>yaag- way</i> ‘cattle’	PWR <i>*yakwaa</i> ~ <i>*hikwaa</i> ‘cattle’

West Rift *x* can correspond to *x* and *h* in Asá and Qwadza. The examples in Table 6 show that Qwadza joins West Rift in some cognates and joins Asá in others. Asá differs from West Rift in all occurrences of this correspondence, and therefore seems the least similar to West Rift, as opposed to Qwadza. Proto-sound **ʃ* likely became *x* in Qwadza, after which it changed to *h* in some instances, while the **ʃ* likely became *h* in Asá, implying a separate development of these sounds. However, in both instances, a marked pharyngeal sound is replaced by a less marked sound. As such, these changes cannot be used for subclassification, but the lexical cognates of Qwadza and West-Rift show that these are related.

Based on these sound correspondences, Asá seems consistently more different from West Rift than Qwadza.

3.2 Gender suffixes

Old Afro-Asiatic gender morphemes are **kw* for masculine and **t* for feminine (Kießling 2000: 7), and the current suffixes on nouns correspond to this. Asá has two allomorphs of the masculine suffix, *-ok* and *-k*, and there are two allomorphs of the feminine suffix, *-et/-t*. The proto-suffix **-ku* developed to *-(o)k* and the proto-suffix **-ta* developed to *-(e)t*. The allomorphs are exemplified below in (3). Note that (3a) and (3d) are affected by vowel harmony; where the root of ‘eland’ in (3b) is *dam* and is followed by a suffix containing [a], the root is *dom* in (3a) and is followed by a suffix containing [o]. The root of ‘rhinoceros’ is *dofu* in (3c), but it has become *def* in (3d) under influence of the *e* in the suffix *-et*. Also note that the root seems to be shortened after the addition of the *-et* suffix.

Table 6: h ~ x

h ~ x	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
h ~ h ~ x root-initial	<i>ho'orus</i> 'to snore, to growl'	<i>hil</i> 'to snore'	PWR * <i>xuruutl</i> 'to snore'
- ~ x ~ x root-initial	-	<i>xab</i> 'to marry (of man)'	PWR * <i>xab</i> 'to marry'
- ~ x ~ x root-internal	-	<i>tsoxoondo</i> 'soda'	PWR * <i>tsaxasaa</i> 'salt'
h ~ x ~ x root-initial	<i>hadonk</i> 'horn'	<i>xalinko</i> 'horn'	PWR * <i>xadaangw</i> ~ * <i>xadamu</i> 'horn, tusk; something protruding'

(3) Asá

- a. *-ok* (m)
dom-ok
eland-MASC
'male eland'
- b. *-t* (f)
dam-ayi-t
eland-SGV-FEM
'female eland'
- c. *-k* (m)
dofu-k
rhinoceros-MASC
'male rhinoceros'
- d. *-et* (f)
def-et
rhinoceros-FEM
'female rhinoceros'

Qwadza seems to have one allomorph of the masculine suffix, *-ko*, and two allomorphs of the feminine suffix, *-to/-o*. In addition, there is the neuter suffix -

wa. The *-ku developed to *-ko* and the *-ta developed to *-(t)o*. The allomorphs are shown in (4). Examples (4a-ii), (4b-ii), (4c-ii), and (4d-ii) serve as evidence that these are suffixes. Note the vowel harmony in (4c). Either the *a* in the suffix *-wa* causes full assimilation of the root vowel, resulting in the surface form *yawa*, or the feminine suffix *-o* causes the root vowel to change to *o*, resulting in *yo'o*. As will be shown later on, the Qwadza neuter gender mostly corresponds to West Rift (p) gender, a value of gender that causes the same agreement as a third person plural subject.

(4) Qwadza

- a. *-ko* (m)
 - i. sag-i-ko
head-SGV-MASC
'head'
 - ii. sag-ela
head-PL
'heads'
- b. *-to* (f)
 - i. 'ag
eat
'eat'
 - ii. 'ag-o-to
eat-NMLZ-FEM
'food'
- c. *-o* (f)
 - i. ya-wa
child-NEUT
'children'
 - ii. yo'-o
child-FEM
'child, children'
- d. *-wa* (n)
 - i. tlunga-to
?-FEM
'sky'

- ii. *tlunga-wa*
 ?-NEUT
 ‘cloud’

The feminine suffixes *-(e)t* of Asá and *-to* and *-o* of Qwadza correspond to feminine suffixes found across Cushitic. According to Castellino (1970), there are two types of suffixes: “A, a first type having as principal feature a vowel or a vowel plus consonant other than *t*; B, a second type in which (feminine) gender is marked by means of morphemes characterized by the presence of a consonant which, in most cases, is *-t*.” The latter type is said to be more common (Castellino 1970: 349-350). The *-to* suffix matches the description of Castellino’s type B, and *-o* matches his type A. In the discussion of this article, it is added that many Cushitic languages have a *k/t* alternation for masculine and feminine, respectively (Castellino 1970: 358-359). This reflects the feminine suffixes as exemplified above, but also the masculine *-(o)k* suffix in Asá and the masculine *-ko* suffix in Qwadza.

There are 115 nouns in the database, of which 52 have cognates in Asá, Qwadza and (Proto-)West Rift. From these 52, there are 19 instances of a cognate with the same gender in all three languages (shown in Table 7 and Table 8). This mostly consists of basic lexicon, like words for body parts, environment, and some animals.²

In addition, of the 52 nouns that have cognates in all three languages, there are 15 nouns that show the same gender suffix in Qwadza and Proto-West Rift, but a different one in Asá. The gender in Asá is in these cases unrecognizable, as can be seen in Table 9, example 24 for masculine, 25 for feminine, and 26 for neuter. The lack of a suffix in Asá may point to truncation of the suffix, or indicate an unidentified gender in *-a*. The last possibility seems likely when looking at example 27, since the Qwadza root *yaag* is followed by the neuter suffix *-wa*, which would correspond to an Asá root *yag* followed by a possible neuter suffix *-a*.

Of the 52 cognate nouns, there are only 7 nouns that have the same gender suffix in Asá and Qwadza, and a different one in West Rift. This is shown in Table 10: example 28 for the masculine in Asá and Qwadza, and example 29 for the feminine in Asá and Qwadza.

²Examples in brackets indicate that the cognacy between the lexemes is not convincing. However, these lexemes are shown for reasons of transparency and potential cognacy.

Table 7: Cognates with the same gender (masculine) in Asá, Qwadza, and West Rift

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
5	<i>mono-k</i> ‘heart’	<i>muna-ku</i> ‘heart’	PWR * <i>muuná</i> (sg.m) ‘heart’
6	<i>tibiš-ok</i> ‘gravy, broth’	<i>dabadzi-ko</i> ‘broth, gravy’	PWR * <i>dabatsuu’a</i> (col.m) ‘gravy, broth’
7	<i>lupa’-ok</i> ‘upper arm’	<i>lupa’i-ko</i> ‘hand’	IRGO * <i>tluba/a</i> (sg.m) ‘upper arm’
8	<i>lehe-k</i> ‘moon’	<i>slahayi-ko</i> ‘moon’	PWR * <i>slašaangw</i> (sg.m) ‘moon, month’
9	<i>hadon-k</i> ‘horn’	<i>xalin-ko</i> ‘horn’	PWR * <i>xadaangw</i> ~ * <i>xadamu</i> (sg.m) ‘horn, tusk; something pro- tuding’
10	<i>’af-ok</i> ‘mouth’	<i>’afu-ko</i> ‘mouth’	PWR * <i>’afa</i> (sg.m) ‘mouth’
11	<i>hade-k</i> ‘sweat’	(<i>dulutu-ko</i> ‘sweat’)	PWR * <i>haru’u</i> (sg.m) ‘dew’
12	<i>mor-ok</i> ‘house’	<i>mali-ko</i> ‘house’	PWR * <i>mara</i> (sg.m) ‘house’
13	<i>sog-ok</i> ‘head’	<i>sagi-ko</i> ‘head’	PWR * <i>saga</i> (sg.m) ‘head’
14	<i>šugum-ok</i> ‘bushbuck’	<i>tsa’u-ko</i> ‘kid, lamb’	PWR * <i>tsakanáy</i> (pl.m) ‘klipspringers’
15	<i>dem-ok</i> ‘morning’	<i>letlemu-ko</i> ‘God’	PWR * <i>tleheema</i> (sg.tant.m) ‘sunshine’
16	<i>kunduf-ok</i> ‘jigger’	(<i>holofe’idu-ko</i> ‘beetle’)	PWR * <i>kuundurufu</i> (n.col.m) ‘spirillum ticks’
17	<i>gwaran-k</i> ‘rat’	<i>gilati-ko</i> ‘fat-mouse’	PIRQ * <i>gwaraangw</i> (sg.m) ‘rat’
18	<i>’id-ok</i> ‘person’	<i>hila-ku</i> ‘person, goat’	PWR * <i>heedi</i> (sg.m) ‘person’

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Table 8: Cognates with the same gender (feminine) in Asá, Qwadza, and West Rift

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
19	'efer-et 'goat'	'afula-tu 'he-goat' ^a	PWR *'afaquraa ~ *'afuraa (pl.f) 'warthogs'
20	isa-t 'neck'	isi-to 'neck'	PWR *'isa (sg.f) 'neck'
21	ila-t 'eye'	'ili-to 'eye'	PWR *'ila (sg.f) 'eye; spring'
22	fari-t 'bone'	fala'a-to 'bone'	PWR *fara (sg.f) 'bone'
23	ya'a-ta 'sandal'	ya'o-o 'foot, leg'	PWR *ya/ata (sg.f) 'sandal'

^aThis suffix deviates from the regular -to suffix.

Table 9: Cognates with corresponding gender in Qwadza and PWR

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
24	waya 'intestines'	wa'itu-ko 'belly'	PWR *wa'ay (sg.m) 'inside'
25	iringa 'nose'	ningwa-to 'nose'	PWR *'uruunga (sg.f) 'nostril, pair of nos- trils, nose'
26	hesa 'tail'	hayiso-wa 'tail'	PWR *'aysoo (sg.n) 'tail, hair of tail'
27	yaga 'cattle'	yaag-wa ~ yaagway 'cattle'	PWR *yakwaa ~ *hik- waa (pl.n) 'cattle'

Table 10: Same gender suffix in Asá and Qwadza, different in West Rift

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
28	<i>'ofolon-k</i> 'navel'	<i>'ofu'u-ko</i> 'navel'	(PIRQ * <i>'afeetloo</i> (sg.n) 'hip, waist, loin')
29	<i>ɲulu-et</i> 'knee'	<i>'ugun-o</i> 'knee'	PWR * <i>guruguunda</i> (sg.m) 'knee'

Lastly, there are only 5 of 52 nouns that have the same gender suffix in Asá and Proto-West Rift, and a different one in Qwadza. This is shown in Table 11: example 30 for the masculine in Asá and West Rift, and example 31 for the feminine in Asá and West Rift (where the corresponding word *'aama* 'mother' in Qwadza lacks a gender suffix).

Table 11: Same gender suffix in Asá and PWR, different in Qwadza

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
30	<i>mong-ok</i> 'arm'	<i>munga'ay-o</i> 'bracelet'	PWR * <i>maangaa'u</i> (sg.m) 'front leg'
31	<i>'ama'e-to</i> 'older girl'	<i>'aama</i> 'mother' (term of address)	PWR * <i>'aama</i> ~ * <i>'aa-</i> <i>maa</i> (sg.f) 'mother, old woman'

Regarding gender suffix correspondences, most nouns of which three cognates are present, have the same gender. This, again, confirms the relatedness of the languages. However, outside of this core group of nouns, Asá is the least similar to West Rift, and also not convincingly similar to Qwadza. The corresponding suffixes show that Qwadza and West Rift have a lot of gender correspondences, and are thus more similar. This suggests that Asá is the least similar to both Qwadza and Proto-West Rift.

As was explained, (p) gender is a value of gender that causes the same agreement as a third person plural subject. Of the cognates Asá and Proto-West Rift have, the instances of (p) gender in Proto-West Rift (a total of 10 nouns) correspond to either a zero suffix (example 32) or a masculine suffix in Asá (example 33 and 34). In addition, all of the zero gendered nouns in Asá end in *a*, except example 35 in Table 12, which could be assimilation to the root vowel *e*.

Table 12: West Rift (p) gender vs. Asá cognates

Asá	West Rift
32 <i>liba</i> ‘milk’	PWR *’ <i>ilibaa</i> (pl.tant.n) ‘milk’
33 (<i>’agun-k</i> ‘honey’)	(PNWR *’ <i>aanxari</i> (n.acti.n) ‘phlegm’)
34 (<i>’ofolon-k</i> ‘navel’)	(PIRQ *’ <i>afeetloo</i> (sg.n) ‘hip, waist, loin’)
35 <i>gide’e</i> ‘ribs’	PIRQ *’ <i>gwe’eedoo</i> (sg.n) ‘pair of buttocks, bottom’

In Qwadza, cognates of the nouns can have masculine (example 36), feminine (example 37) or neuter gender (example 38), shown in Table 13.

Table 13: West Rift (p) gender vs. Qwadza cognates

Qwadza	West Rift
36 <i>’angali-ko</i> ‘honey’	PNWR *’ <i>aanxari</i> (n.acti.n) ‘phlegm’
37 <i>ge’eli-to</i> ‘loins’	PIRQ *’ <i>gwe’eedoo</i> (sg.n) ‘pair of buttocks, bottom’
38 <i>hayiso-wa</i> ‘tail’	PWR *’ <i>laysoo</i> (sg.n) ‘tail, hair of tail’

In fact, underived neuter nouns in Qwadza usually have a Proto-West Rift cognate in (p) gender, as is shown in example 39. The only exceptions that were found in the database, are two nouns that do not have a cognate in Proto-West Rift, and therefore it cannot be confirmed what the gender in Proto-West Rift would be. However, the Asá cognates have unmarked /-a gender. The two nouns are shown in example 40 and 41. Other instances of Qwadza neuter nouns are deverbal derivations, based on cognates in Asá and Proto-West Rift. This is shown in example 42, all in Table 14.

In sum, Asá and Qwadza nouns correspond less to each other in terms of gender suffixes than Qwadza and Proto-West Rift do, and Asá and Proto-West Rift correspond less than Qwadza and Proto-West Rift. So, again, we can conclude that Asá stands further from Proto-West Rift than Qwadza does.

Table 14: Asá and Qwadza ‘neuter’ nouns vs. West Rift cognates

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
39	<i>yaga</i> ‘cattle’	<i>yaag-wa</i> ~ <i>yaag-way</i> ‘cattle’	PWR * <i>yakwaa</i> ~ * <i>hik-waa</i> (pl.n) ‘cattle’
40	<i>’ajota</i> ‘day’	<i>’atso-wa</i> ‘day’	-
41	<i>liga</i> ‘tooth’	<i>’islik-wa</i> ‘teeth’	-
42	<i>ma’</i> - ‘to avoid, to leave alone’	<i>mayik-wa</i> ‘avoidance object’	PWR * <i>maw</i> (v) ‘let, leave, avoid’

3.3 Verbal extensions

As has been shown in §2, Asá and Qwadza both have formative suffixes that correspond to the formative suffixes across Cushitic. However, the same suffixes are not always found on the same words in Asá and Qwadza. This is also not the case for Qwadza and Proto-West Rift, but even less so for Asá and Qwadza. See Table 15.

Table 15: Non-corresponding formative suffixes

	Asá	Qwadza	West Rift
43	<i>hla’-at</i> ‘to love, to like’	<i>sla’-as</i> ‘love, like’ <i>sla’</i> ‘purify’	PWR * <i>sla’</i> (v) ‘love, like, want’
44	<i>ra’</i> ‘to stay, to remain’	<i>da’am</i> ‘to watch’	PIRQ * <i>daam</i> ‘to wait, to expect’

However, the limitations of the data come into play here. There are only few instances of recognizable verbal morphology and when one verbal extension is found, this does not mean another verbal extension does not exist.

4 Conclusion

The goal of this study has been to answer two questions: “1. Are Asá and Qwadza Cushitic languages?” and “2. Are Asá and Qwadza Southern Cushitic languages forming East Rift Southern Cushitic?”. Answering these questions have led to newly gained analyses and insights about the subclassification of the Cushitic language family.

Before concluding this study, it should be noted that there is a large lack of data, and it is not possible to collect more. This affects the quality of any analysis formed about the classification of Asá and Qwadza. In addition, it is difficult to fully rely on the data, since especially the earlier sources were not written by linguists. Also, since gender suffixes on nouns are a retention of Cushitic, it is difficult to use them for subclassification, and because gender and number are encoded together, one cannot be sure that the gender on a noun in these languages is underived.

Despite these challenges, it has been shown that Asá and Qwadza have convincing cognates with West Rift. Gender and derivational morphology are present on the lexemes, suggesting membership in the Cushitic language family and relatively close relatedness to the West Rift language branch of Cushitic. Phonological evidence places Asá as the more distant from West Rift. Qwadza is closer to West Rift, as it has retained (or innovated) the same phones in cognates. A classification of Asá under East Cushitic is implied by one of the sound correspondences, as this would require the least sound changes. However, this is highly speculative and more research is needed into this. The gender suffixes also place Asá as most distant from West Rift. For both Asá and Qwadza, different derivational morphology is present on the same cognates. This suggests that this is not a common innovation. Since Asá developed many features separately, it seems to have split off from Rift first (or it belongs to East Cushitic). Qwadza has some common developments with West Rift, so it seems to have split off second. At this point, there is not much proof for Asá and Qwadza forming the East Rift group together. However, more research is needed to find out how exactly these languages fit into the Cushitic language family. In order to argue for a more accurate subclassification of Asá and Qwadza, it is necessary to find how Southern Cushitic fits in Cushitic and if and how Asá would fit into East Cushitic. Other topics for further research are the lack of gender suffixes on some Asá and Qwadza nouns, the variation of forms of suffixes, and the Asá connection with East Cushitic.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations in this chapter follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following additions.

ALBU	Alagwa-Burunge	n.acti	nomen acti
.f/FEM	feminine gender	PIRQ	Proto-Iraqw
IRGO	Iraqw-Gorwaa	pl.tant	plurale tantum
.m/MASC	masculine gender	PWR	Proto-West Rift
.n/NEUT	neuter gender	SGV	singulative
n.	noun	v.	verb

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