Included in this list are words appearing more than once in the text or judged to be essential for the understanding of what is taking place. The names of trees and shrubs are not listed, as they appear separately in appendix 2.

- **buibui**: the black, all enveloping wrap worn by Muslim women
- **dawa**: medicine
- **dereto**: a (Bonî) malevolent spirit
- **duka**: a shop, especially of the small, village variety
- **El Niño**: a weather phenomenon that caused a long and heavy rainy season on the Kenyan coast
- **fundi**: an expert in a particular field
- **haramu**: polluted according to Muslim dietary laws
- **ithai**: Boni spirits of the bush
- **kafir**: a pagan, a non-Muslim
- **kanzu**: a white cassock worn by Muslim men
- **Kimbo**: a brand of cooking fat
- **kitenge**: a brightly coloured wrap worn by women
- **kofia**: a hat, in the Bargoni context an embroidered variety originating in Lamu
- **liwali**: formerly a headman appointed by the government to deal with the affairs of the Islamic community
- **mabati**: corrugated iron sheeting used especially as a roofing material
- **madrasa**: an Islamic school where Arabic and Qur’anic instruction is dispensed
- **makuti**: palm thatch used for roofing
- **mandazi**: a deep fried doughnut
- **mwalimu**: a teacher, both a school teacher and an Islamic teacher
- **Mzee**: term of respect used to address a male elder
- **panga**: a bush knife, a machete
- **sadaka**: an offering
- **safari**: a journey
- **shamba**: a field
- **shifta**: a Somali bandit
- **sufuria**: an aluminium cooking pot
- **uchawi**: sorcery or witchcraft