

# Chapter 22

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## Adverbs

An adverb is commonly used to modify a verb, but it can also modify an adjective, another adverb or a phrase in a sentence. An adverb shows how, when or where a person or an object does an action. There are five main types of adverbs: Adverbs of Manner, Place, Time, Frequency and Degree. In this chapter, we will discuss the different kinds of Adverbs and how they are formed.

### Section A: Adverbs of Manner

An Adverb of Manner is used to show how an action took place, is taking place or will take place. It can be formed in one of the following ways: Single words, *ki-* or *vi-* prefixes, *u-* or *w-* prefixes, duplicative adverbs, using *kwa* and lastly, imitative adverbs.

#### 1. Single words

There are some common adverbs which exist in Swahili.

- ghafla* – suddenly
- haraka* – quickly
- kabisa* – completely, thoroughly
- hasa* – especially
- pamoja* – together
- taratibu* – slowly
- peke* – -self, alone

Examples:

*Simba alikufa ghafla.* – The lion died suddenly.

*Wataimba pamoja.* – They will sing together.

2. By using *ki-* or *vi-* prefixes attached to adjectives or nouns. The choice of attaching a *ki-* or *vi-* prefix was arbitrarily chosen by Swahili people, depending on what sounded better to them. These prefixes have no differences in meaning.

*kitoto* – like a child

*kizungu* – like a European

*kipumbavu* – like an idiot

*kiaskari* – like a soldier

*kiume* – like a man

*kikondoo* – like a sheep

*kizee* – like an old man

*vizuri* – nicely

*vibaya* – badly

*vigumu* – difficult

*vingine* – in another way

Examples:

*Ameandika vibaya.* – He/She wrote badly.

*Nitatengeneza pesa vingine.* – I will make money in another way.

*Ninapenda kula kizungu.* – I like to eat in European style (with knife and fork).

*Alijibu maswali kipumbavu.* – He/She answered questions like an idiot.

3. By using *u-* or sometimes *w-* prefix attached to adjectives or nouns to form adverbs.

*upesi* – fast

*upande* – sideways

*upya* – new

*wima* – upright

Examples:

*Simama wima.* – Stand upright.

*Gari lile limekwenda upande.* – That car has gone sideways.

4. By duplicative adverbs.

*polepole* – slowly

*sawasawa* – same

*vilevile* – equally

*mojamoja* – one by one

*mbalimbali* – different, differently

*kisirisiri* – secretly

*kizunguzungu* – dizzy

*katakata* – completely

*nyatunyatu* – stealthily

Examples:

*Mlitembea polepole.* – You (pl.) walked slowly.

*Nilimwambia kisirisiri.* – I told him/her secretly.

5. By using words such as *kwa*.

*kwa ghafla* – suddenly

*kwa haraka* – with speed

*kwa kusudi* – intentionally

*kwa kifupi* – in short

*kwa bahati* – with luck

*kwa sauti* – loudly

*kwa siri* – secretly

*kwa ndege* – by air

*kwa shida* – with difficulty

*kwa nguvu* – with force

Examples:

*Ameipika kwa haraka.* – He/She has cooked fast.

*Kwa bahati, nilifaulu.* – Luckily, I passed.

*Nilimwoa kwa siri.* – I married her secretly.

6. By imitative adverbs which represents an idea in sound.

*pumzika fofofo* – resting soundly

*nuka fee* – smell badly

*anguka pu* – fall on the sand

*kufa fofofo* – stone dead

Examples:

*Yaya atapumzika fofofo.* – The nanny will rest soundly.

*Nyati wa kufugwa alinuka fee.* – The water buffalo smelled badly.

## Practice Exercise A

Translate into Swahili

1. They walked like a soldier.
2. The villagers travelled on foot.
3. Melissa lives by herself.

## Section B: Adverbs of Place

An Adverb of Place is used to show where an action took place, is taking place or will take place. It can be formed in two ways: Single words or with “mahali” class markers *p*, *k* or *m*.

1. Single words

There are some common adverbs which exist in Swahili.

*ndani* – inside

*mbali* – far, far away

*karibu* – near, near by

*nje* – outside

*chini* – below

*mbele* – front, in front

*juu* – above

*nyuma* – behind

*katikati* – among, middle

Examples:

*Kimondo kilianguka katikati ya ziwa.* – The meteor fell in the middle of a lake.

*Unyang'anyi utatokea mbali.* – The robbery will happen far away.

## 2. Using “mahali” class markers *p*, *k* or *m*

These markers can be used in a variety of ways such as demonstratives, adjectives, possessives, and *-a* of Association.

*hapa* – here (definite)

*kule* – there (indefinite)

*mwenye* – having (inside)

*engine* – another place (definite)

*kwao* – their place (indefinite)

*pangu* – my place (definite)

*kwa mwalimu* – at teacher's place (indefinite)

Examples:

*Alinunua mahali pote.* – He/She bought the whole place (definite).

*esoma kwa Ali.* – He/She has studied at Ali's place (indefinite).

*Mle kuna kioski.* – Inside there, there is a kiosk.

Note that sometimes it is possible to add the locative suffix *-ni* to nouns denoting places to form an Adverb of Place. For example:

*Nyumbani humo mna nyoka.* – Inside this house, there are snakes.

## Practice Exercise B

Translate into English

4. *Nilimwalika kwangu kwa ajili ya sikukuu.*

5. *Tafadhali njoo hapa.*

6. *Viatu havimo ndani ya kabati.*

## Section C: Adverbs of Time

An Adverb of Time is used to show when an action took place, is taking place or will take place. It can be formed in two ways: Single words or compound words, or with “mahali” class markers *p*, *k* or *m*. The single or compound words may be specific to a particular time, such as a day, month or time of the year or they may not refer to any particular time.

### 1. Single or compound words

There are some common adverbs which exist in Swahili.

*Jumamosi* – Saturday  
*Mwaka wa 2010* – The Year of 2010  
*saa mbili asubuhi* – 8 am  
*jioni* – evening  
*mwaka jana* – last year  
*baadaye* – after  
*zamani* – long ago  
*sasa* – now

Examples:

*Zamani palinyesha.* – Long ago, it rained here (definite place).  
*Uchaguzi utakuwa saa tatu asubuhi.* – The election will be at 9 am.

### 2. Using “mahali” class markers *p*, *k* or *m*

Unlike in the Adverbs of Place, these markers can only be used in a limited number of ways as Adverbs of Time and do not refer to any particular time.

*huku* – while, meanwhile  
*mara pale pale* – just then  
*mnamo* – about

Examples:

*Alisoma gazeti huku anakula.* – He/She was reading the newspaper while eating.  
*Mara pale pale, alizimia.* – Just then, he/she fainted.  
*Tunatarajia kurudi mnamo saa moja .* – We expect to return at about seven o'clock.

## Practice Exercise C

Translate into Swahili

7. The rooster crows every dawn.
8. The mailman will come at 4 pm.
9. We will cook while listening to music.

## Section D: Adverbs of Frequency

An Adverb of Frequency is used to show how often an action took place, is taking place or will take place. It can be formed using single or compound words.

### 1. Single or Compound words

There are some common adverbs which exist in Swahili.

- mara moja* – once
- mara tatu* – thrice
- mara ya kwanza* – first time
- mara ya mwisho* – last time
- mara chache* – few times
- mara nyingi* – many times
- tena* – again

Examples:

*Nilitoa sadaka mara chache mwaka uliopita.* – I gave charity a few times last year.

*Tunasafiri mara ya kwanza kwa ndege.* – We are travelling for the first time by air.

*Aliiba tena.* – He/She stole again.

## Practice Exercise D

Translate into English

10. *Mara nyingi, kompyuta haifanyi kazi.*
11. *Nilikwenda duka la maua lile mara moja tu.*
12. *Hii ni mara ya mwisho utapata bonasi.*

## Section E: Adverbs of Degree

An Adverb of Degree shows the degree or intensity of something.

- zaidi* – more
- mno* – a lot, very
- kiasi* – a bit
- sana* – very, a lot
- kabisa* – completely
- kwa kweli* – really, truly

Examples:

- Kahawa ilikuwa moto mno.* – The coffee was very hot.
- Alikuwa na akili sana.* – He/She has a lot of intelligence.

Please note that there are a few single words that exist as more than one type of adverb. For example, *kabisa* can be used as an Adverb of Manner as well as an Adverb of Degree.

### Adverb of Manner

*Nimewahi kabisa.* – I arrived completely on time.

### Adverb of Degree

*Mteja hakuwa na sababu kabisa.* – The customer is completely unreasonable.

## Practice Exercise E

Translate into Swahili

13. The kite flew up a bit.
14. Really, you bought seven shirts?
15. They got a lot of praise for their discovery.



## New Vocabulary

- akili*: intelligence  
*alika*: invite  
*anguka pu*: fall on the sand  
*baadaye*: after  
*bonasi*: bonus(es)  
*chini*: below, under  
*faulu*: be successful, pass (a test)  
*ghafla*: suddenly  
*hasa*: especially  
*huku*: while, meanwhile  
*jogoo/ma-*: rooster(s)  
*juu*: up, above, on top  
*kabisa*: completely, thoroughly  
*katakata*: completely  
*katikati*: among, middle  
*kiasi*: a bit  
*kiaskari*: like a soldier  
*kikondoo*: like a sheep  
*kimondo/vi-*: meteor(s)  
*kioski*: kiosk(s)  
*kipumbavu*: like an idiot  
*kisirisiri*: secretly  
*kitoto*: like a child  
*kiume*: like a man  
*kizee*: like an old man  
*kizungu*: like a European  
*kizunguzungu*: dizzy  
*kufa fofofo*: stone dead  
*kwa kifupi*: in short  
*kwa kusudi*: intentionally  
*kwa kweli*: really, truly  
*kwa sauti*: loudly  
*mara*: time(s), occasion(s)  
*mara pale pale*: just then  
*mbalimbali*: different, differently  
*mbele*: front, in front  
*mnamo*: about

*mno*: a lot  
*mojamoja*: one by one  
*mtu/wa- anayeleta/wa- barua*: mailman/mailmen  
*muziki*: music  
*mwanakijiji/wa-*: villager(s)  
*ndani*: inside  
*njoo*: come  
*nuka fee*: smell badly  
*nyati wa kufugwa*: water buffalo(es)  
*nyatunyatu*: stealthily  
*nyuma*: behind  
*oa*: marry (for men only)  
*pamoja*: together  
*peke*: -self, alone  
*polepole*: slowly  
*pumzika fofofo*: resting soundly  
*sadaka*: charity(ies)  
*sasa*: now  
*shida*: trouble(s), difficulty(ies), hardship(s)  
*sikukuu*: holiday(s)  
*tafadhali*: please  
*taratibu*: slowly  
*tembea*: walk  
*tiara*: kite(s)  
*tokea*: happen, come out  
*uchaguzi*: election(s)  
*ugunduzi*: discovery(ies)  
*unyang'anyi*: robbery(ies)  
*upande*: sideways  
*upesini*: fast  
*upya*: new  
*vibaya*: badly  
*vigumu*: difficult  
*vingine*: in another way  
*vizuri*: nicely, well  
*wahi*: be on time  
*wika*: crow  
*wima*: upright  
*yaya/ma-*: nanny(ies)

*zimia*: faint

*ziwa/ma-*: lake(s), pond(s)

## Key to Exercises

### Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *Walitembea kiaskari.*
2. *Wanakijiji walisafiri kwa miguu.*
3. *Melissa anaishi peke yake.*

### Answers to Practice Exercise B

4. I invited him/her to my place because of the holiday(s).
5. Please come here.
6. The shoes are not inside the locker.

### Answer to Practice Exercise C

7. *Jogoo anawika kila alfajiri.*
8. *Mtu anayeleta barua atakuja saa kumi jioni.*
9. *Tutapika huku tunasikia muziki.*

### Answer to Practice Exercise D

10. Many times, the computer does not work.
11. I went to that flower store once only.
12. This is the last time you will get a bonus.

### Answer to Practice Exercise E

13. *Tiara iliruka kwenda juu kiasi.*
14. *Kwa kweli, ulinunua mashati saba?*
15. *Wao walipata sifa nyingi kwa ajili ya ugunduzi wao.*

