

Chapter 28

Relatives - The *amba-* Relative, Relative Infixes and General Relative

In this chapter, we will teach three different types of relatives, which are as follows:

1. The *amba-* Relative
2. Relative Infixes
3. The General Relative

Each type of relative has one specific way by which it can be used to form a sentence containing a relative pronoun. A relative pronoun is used to refer back to a noun, which in English would be translated as “who,” “whom” or “which.” Relative pronouns must be constructed using the relative particles from the appropriate noun class as shown in Table 28.1

Section A: The *amba-* Relative

The *amba-* Relative can be used with any verb and with any tense. A sentence using the *amba-* Relative must start with a noun, pronoun or a demonstrative used as a noun, followed by the word *amba-*, which must have the relative particle, attached as a suffix. For example, if we want to use the *amba-* Relative with a noun in the M-/WA- noun class in the singular, we must combine *amba-* with the relative particle *-ye* from Table 28.1 to form *ambaye*, which would mean “who” or “whom.” If we want to use the *amba-* Relative with a noun in the M-/WA- noun class

in the plural, we must combine *amba-* with *-o* to form *ambao*, which would also mean “who” or “whom.”

TABLE 28.1
Relative Particles Chart

Noun Class	Relative Particles (Singular)	Relative Particles (Plural)
M-/WA-	<i>ye</i>	<i>o</i>
M-/MI-	<i>o</i>	<i>yo</i>
JI-/MA-	<i>lo</i>	<i>yo</i>
KI-/VI-	<i>cho</i>	<i>vyo</i>
N-	<i>yo</i>	<i>zo</i>
U-	<i>o</i>	<i>zo</i>
PA-	<i>po, ko, mo</i>	<i>po, ko, mo</i>
KU-	<i>ko</i>	<i>ko</i>

Examples:

Yule ambaye atanunua kompyuta. – That person who will buy a computer.

Kiti ambacho kilivunjika. – The chair which was broken.

Mnyama ambaye tumemwona. – An animal which we have seen.

Jua ambalo linawaka. – The Sun which is shining.

Sisi ambao tulifika salama. – We who arrived safe.

Sentences using the *amba-* Relative are negated by replacing the affirmative Subject Prefix with the negative Subject Prefix, negating the tense marker and followed by the verb. The *amba-* Relative remains unchanged as shown in the examples below:

Yule ambaye hatanunua kompyuta. – That person who will not buy a computer.

Kiti ambacho hakikuvunjika. – The chair which was not broken.

Mnyama ambaye hatujamwona. – An animal which we have not yet seen.

Jua ambalo haliwaki. – The Sun which is not shining.

Sisi ambao hatukufika salama. – We who did not arrive safe.

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following sentences into Swahili using the *amba-* Relative.

1. The tooth which has been extracted.
2. The walls which have not been painted.
3. The houses which are being built in the city.
4. The place which was sold yesterday.
5. The reading which was good.
6. The student who studies at university.
7. The table which will be sold tomorrow.
8. The doctor who did not treat people with AIDS.
9. The woman who was not married last year.
10. The youth who did not get a present at school.
11. The tractor which was not damaged.
12. The train which is travelling fast.
13. The vehicle which killed the dog.
14. The window which was broken.
15. The floor which was not cleaned.
16. The guests who arrived today.
17. The plane which caught fire.
18. The road which will be repaired.
19. The bed which has not been sold.
20. The women who won.

Section B: Relative Infixes

Unlike the *amba-* Relative, Relative Infixes can only be used with the present, simple past and future tenses. When it is used with the future tense, the syllable *-ka-* is attached to the tense marker *-ta-* to form *taka-*. Relative Infixes are NEVER used with the past perfect tense.

Just like sentences using the *amba-* Relative, sentences using a Relative Infix must also start with a noun, pronoun or a demonstrative used as a noun. This is followed by subject prefix, tense marker, relative particle from Table 28.1 used as an infix, and finally the verb. For example, if we want to make the sentence “The girls who will receive presents,” we would have:

Wasichana watakaopata zawadi. – The girls who will receive presents.

Other examples:

Watoto wanaocheke sana. – Children who laugh a lot.

Fedha zilizoibiwa kutoka benki. – Money which was stolen from the bank.

Mashine ya ATM iliyowekwa katika baa. – The ATM machine which was installed in the bar.

Sentences using Relative Infixes are negated depending on the tense marker. If the sentence uses the present tense, it is negated in one of two ways. The first way is by replacing the present tense marker *-na-* with *-si-* as shown in the example below:

Watoto wanaocheke sana. – *Watoto wasiocheke sana.*

Children who laugh a lot. – Children who do not laugh a lot.

Note that the subject prefix, relative particle and the verb remains unchanged.

The second way is by replacing the affirmative Subject Prefix with the negative Subject Prefix, negating the tense marker and verb and finally removing the Relative Infix and attach it to the *amba-* Relative as a suffix as shown in the example below:

Watoto wanaocheke sana. – *Watoto ambao hawacheki sana.*

Children who laugh a lot. – Children who do not laugh a lot.

Sentences using the simple past or future tense are negated in only one way. They are negated by replacing the affirmative Subject Prefix with the negative Subject Prefix, negating the tense marker and finally removing the Relative Infix and attach it to the *amba-* Relative as a suffix as shown in the examples below:

Wasichana watakaopata zawadi. – *Wasichana ambao hawatapata zawadi.*

The girls who will receive presents. – The girls who will not receive presents.

Fedha zilizoibiwa kutoka benki. – Fedha ambazo hazikuibiwa kutoka benki.

The money which was stolen from the bank. – The money which was not stolen from the bank.

Practice Exercise B

Translate into English.

21. *Makarani wasiosoma Kiingereza.*
22. *Matofali yaliyotumika kujenga nyumba.*
23. *Vijana waliofika asubuhi wameondoka.*
24. *Hii ni milango iliyoharibika.*
25. *Mwizi aliyekamatwa amefungwa.*
26. *Dereva aliyepinduka amefariki.*
27. *Moto ambao haukuunguza nyumba.*
28. *Huyu ni meneja atakayefukuzwa kazi.*
29. *Nani atakayekulipia ada?*
30. *Watu waliofungwa wameachiliwa.*
31. *Maduka ambayo hayana faida.*
32. *Mafundi wanaofanya kazi vizuri.*
33. *Jambazi linalowatishia watu.*
34. *Milango isiyofungwa.*
35. *Hoteli zinazojaa watalii.*
36. *Mwezi ambao haukuwa na joto sana.*
37. *Vyuo vikuu vilivyofungwa.*
38. *Mitihani ambayo haikufanyika.*
39. *Watu wasiopendwa.*
40. *Nyumba zilizojengwa kwa mbao.*

Section C: General Relative

Unlike the other two relatives we have discussed thus far, the General Relative is only used with the present tense to denote indefinite present tense. However, note that the present tense marker itself (*-na-*) does not appear with the verb in the sentence. A sentence using a General Relative must also start with a noun, pronoun or a demonstrative used as a noun. This is followed by the Subject Prefix followed immediately by the verb and finally the relative particle is attached as a suffix to the verb.

For example, if we want to make the sentence “A woman who climbs mountains” we would have:

Mwanamke apandaye milima. – A woman who climbs mountains.

More examples:

Miti iotayo porini. – Trees which grow in the wild.

Maua yanunuliwayo sokoni. – Flowers which are bought at the market.

Mahali panukiapo vizuri. – A place which smells good.

Wanyama walao nyasi. – Animals which feed on grass.

Also note that in the last example, the *-ku-* infinitive is not attached to the Monosyllabic verb in the affirmative form.

Sentences using General Relatives are negated by inserting *-si-* between the subject prefix and the verb. In addition, the relative particle changes from being a suffix to an infix as shown in the examples below:

Mwanamke asiypanda milima. – A woman who does not climb mountains.

Miti isiyoota porini. – Trees which do not grow in the wild.

Maua yasiyonunuliwa sokoni. – Flowers which are not bought at the market.

Mahali pasiponukia vizuri. – A place which does not smell good.

Wanyama wasiokula nyasi. – Animals which do not eat grass.

Please note that *-si-* is inserted in the same position as the omitted present tense marker. Also note that the *-ku-* infinitive is attached to the Monosyllabic verb in the negated form.

Practice Exercise C

Translate into Swahili using the General Relative.

41. The engineer who builds houses.
42. The child who cries at night.
43. The people who vote.
44. Timber which is bought.
45. Children who do not play Nintendo.
46. The door which is locked.
47. The author who visits schools.

48. The police officer who arrests criminals.
49. The store which sells products.
50. The guard who does not work at night.
51. The father who works two jobs.
52. The person who travels to Brazil.
53. The nation which cares about its people.
54. The carpenter who does not work very hard.
55. The artist who sells expensive pictures.
56. The child who saves money.
57. The dog which guards the house.
58. A city which cleans its streets.
59. The animals that are in the zoo.
60. The cat that catches mice.

New Vocabulary

achia: release
ada: fee(s)
baa/ma-: bar(s)
fundi/ma-: craftsperson(s)
jali: care
joto: hot, heat
kamata: arrest, catch
kasi: fast
kura: vote(s)
mashine ya/za ATM: ATM machine(s)
mbao: wood, timber
mhalifu/wa-: criminal(s)
nyasi/ma-: grass(es)
picha: picture(s)
piga kura: cast a vote
pinduka: overturn
pori: wilderness
tibu: treat, cure
tisha: scare, threaten
tofali/ma-: brick(s)
treni: train(s)
wekwa: put in, install

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *Jino ambalo limeng'olewa.*
2. *Kuta ambazo hazijapakwa rangi.*
3. *Nyumba ambazo zinajengwa mjini.*
4. *Mahali ambapo paliuzwa jana.*
5. *Kusoma ambako kulikuwa kuzuri.*
6. *Mwanafunzi ambaye anasoma chuo kikuu.*
7. *Meza ambayo itauzwa kesho.*
8. *Daktari ambaye hakuwatibu watu waliokuwa na Ukimwi.*
9. *Mwanamke ambaye hakuolewa mwaka jana.*
10. *Kijana ambaye hakupata zawadi shuleni.*
11. *Trekta ambalo halikuharibika.*
12. *Treni ambalo linasafiri kwa kasi.*
13. *Gari ambalo lilimwua mbwa.*
14. *Dirisha ambalo lilivunjika.*
15. *Sakafu ambayo haikusafishwa.*
16. *Wageni ambao walifika leo.*
17. *Ndege ambayo ilishika moto.*
18. *Barabara ambayo itatengenezwa.*
19. *Kitanda ambacho hakijauzwa.*
20. *Wanawake ambao wameshinda.*

Answers to Practice Exercise B

21. The clerks who are not studying English.
22. The bricks which were used to build a house(s).
23. The youths who arrived in the morning have left.
24. These are the doors which were destroyed.
25. The thief who was arrested has been jailed.
26. The driver who overturned has died.
27. The fire which did not burn down the house
28. This is the manager who will be sacked.
29. Who will pay the fees for you?
30. The people who were jailed have been released.
31. The shops which are not profitable.
32. The craftsmen who do a good job.
33. The gangster who threatens people.

34. The doors which are not locked.
35. The hotels which are full of tourists.
36. The month which was not very hot.
37. The universities which were closed.
38. The exams which were not held.
39. The people who are not liked.
40. The houses which were built of timber.

Answers to Practice Exercise C

41. *Mhandisi ajengaye nyumba.*
42. *Mtoto aliaye usiku.*
43. *Watu wapigao kura.*
44. *Mbao zinunuliwazo.*
45. *Watoto wasiocheza Nintendo.*
46. *Mlango ufungwao.*
47. *Mwandishi atembeleaye shule.*
48. *Polisi akamataye wahalifu.*
49. *Duka liuzalo bidhaa.*
50. *Mlinzi asiyefanya kazi usiku.*
51. *Baba afanyaye kazi mbili.*
52. *Mtu asafiriye kwenda Brazili.*
53. *Taifa lijalilo watu wake.*
54. *Seremala asiyefanya kazi sana.*
55. *Mchoraji auzaye picha kwa bei ghali.*
56. *Mtoto awekaye pesa akiba.*
57. *Mbwa alindaye nyumba.*
58. *Mji usafishao mitaa yake.*
59. *Wanyama walio katika zu.*
60. *Paka akamataye panya.*

