

Chapter 37

Subjunctives

In Chapter 30 we learned about 2nd person singular and plural commands and requests. In this Chapter we will deal with Subjunctives (*Dhamira Tegemezi*) in all noun classes including 1st and 3rd person singular and plural in the M-/WA- class, and their object infixes whenever necessary. Note that Subjunctives do not use tense markers except for the tense marker *-ka-* which has been taught in Chapter 31. First we will show how affirmative and negative Subjunctives are formed with Bantu, Monosyllabic and Arabic verbs. Finally, we will show some of the common uses of the Subjunctive form.

Section A: Subjunctives with Bantu Verbs

Subjunctives with Bantu Verbs are formed by the Subject Prefix + Bantu verb, with the last vowel *a* changed to *e*. Below are the Subject Prefixes of all Noun Classes in their singular and plural forms.

Subjunctives with Bantu Verbs

- Nianguke!* – Let me fall!
- Tuanguke!* – Let us fall!
- Uanguke!* – Would you (sing.) fall!
- Manguke!* – Would you (pl.) fall!
- Aanguke!* – Let him/her fall!
- Waanguke!* – Let them fall!
- Uanguke!* – Let it fall!
- Ianguke!* – Let them fall!

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Lianguke! – Let it fall!
Yaanguke! – Let them fall!
Kianguke! – Let it fall!
Vianguke! – Let them fall!
Ianguke! – Let it fall!
Zianguke! – Let them fall!
Uanguke! – Let it fall!
Zianguke! – Let them fall!
Paanguke! – Let it fall! (specific location)
Kuanguke! – Let it fall! (general area)
Manguke! – Let it fall! (inside location)
Kuanguke! – Let it fall!

Examples:

Makamanda wapate mafunzo. – Commanders should receive training
Mwanga uwake! – Let the light shine!
Mwalimu alitumbia tuandike. – The teacher told us to write.

Negation of Subjunctives with Bantu Verbs

Subjunctives with Bantu Verbs are negated by using the negative infix *-si-* which is inserted between the Subject Prefix and the Bantu verb which retains the final vowel *e*.

Makamanda wasipate mafunzo. – Commanders should not receive training.
Mwanga usiwake! – Let the light not shine!
Mwalimu alisema tusiandike. – The teacher told us not to write.

Section B: Subjunctives with Monosyllabic Verbs

Subjunctives with Monosyllabic Verbs are formed by the Subject Prefix + Monosyllabic verb stem with the last vowel *a* changed to *e*.

Subjunctives with Monosyllabic Verbs

Nife! – Let me die!
Tufe! – Let us die!
Ufe! – Would you (sing.) die!

Mfe! – Would you (pl.) die!
Afe! – Let him/her die!
Wafe! – Let them die!
Ufe! – Let it die!
Ife! – Let them die!
Life! – Let it die!
Yafe! – Let them die!
Kife! – Let it die!
Vife! – Let them die!
Ife! – Let it die!
Zife! – Let them die!
Ufe! – Let it die!
Zife! – Let them die!
Pafe! – Let it die! (specific location)
Kufe! – Let it die! (general area)
Mfe! – Let it die! (inside location)
Kufe! – Let it die!

Examples:

Wafamasi wanywe divai nyekundu! – Let the pharmacists drink red wine!
Mkutubi aje asubuhi! – Let the librarian come in the morning!
Jua lichwe! – Let the sun rise!

Negation of Subjunctives with Monosyllabic Verbs

Subjunctives with Monosyllabic Verbs are negated by inserting the negative infix *-si-* between the Subject Prefix and the verb stem which retains the final vowel *e*.

Wafamasi wasinywe divai nyekundu! – Let the pharmacists not drink red wine!
Mkutubi asije asubuhi! – Let the librarian not come in the morning!
Jua lisichwe! – Let the sun not rise!

Section C: Subjunctives with Arabic Verbs

Subjunctives with Arabic Verbs are formed by Subject Prefixes + Arabic Verbs. However, unlike Bantu Verbs, the last vowel of an Arabic Verb remains unchanged as shown below.

Subjunctives with Arabic Verbs

- Nisafiri!* – Let me travel!
Tusafiri! – Let us travel!
Usafiri! – Would you (sing.) travel!
Msafiri! – Would you (pl.) travel!
Asafiri! – Let him/her travel!
Wasafiri! – Let them travel!
Usafiri! – Let it travel!
Isafiri! – Let them travel!
Lisafiri! – Let it travel!
Yasafiri! – Let them travel!
Kisafiri! – Let it travel!
Visafiri! – Let them travel!
Isafiri! – Let it travel!
Zisafiri! – Let them travel!
Usafiri! – Let it travel!
Zisafiri! – Let them travel!
Pasafiri! – Let it travel! (specific location)
Kusafiri! – Let it travel! (general area)
Msafiri! – Let it travel! (inside location)
Kusafiri! – Let it travel!

Examples:

- Nirudi Kanada!* – Let me return to Canada!
Meneja alisema mapambo yabaki. – The manager said the decorations should stay.
Kikapu kiketi karibu na jifya! – Let the basket sit near the hearth!

Negation of Subjunctives with Arabic Verbs

Subjunctives with Arabic Verbs are negated by using the negative infix *-si-* which is inserted between the Subject Prefix and the Arabic Verb.

- Nisirudi Kanada!* – Let me not return to Canada!
Meneja alisema mapambo yasibaki. – The manager said the decorations should not stay.
Kikapu kisiketi karibu na jifya! – Let the basket not sit near the hearth!

Section D: Uses of Subjunctives

This section discusses the different ways in which the Subjunctive is used with Bantu, Arabic and Monosyllabic Verbs.

1. The Subjunctive is used after some Prepositions such as the following:

hadi (until, as far as, up to)

hata (even, until)

karibu (almost, nearly)

mpaka (until, as far as, up to)

tangu (since, from)

Winchi isitengenezwe hadi nije.

The winch should not be repaired until I come.

Karibu nimalize kuchimba handaki.

I have nearly finished digging the trench.

Tangu wasafiri hawajaandika barua bado.

Since they travelled, they have not yet written a letter.

2. The Subjunctive is used when the preceding verb is an auxiliary verb such the following:

omba – beg, request

taka – want

ambia – tell

amuru – demand

shauri – advise

kubali – accept

pendekeza – recommend

lazimisha – order, force

acha – permit

fanya – do

panda – like

agiza – order

Mwache acheze na mchanga! – Let him/her play with sand!

Nilikubali apasue puto langu. – I accepted that he/she bursts my balloon.

Alinishauri ninunue hisa. – He/She advised me to buy stock(s).

3. The Subjunctive is used when the preceding verb is an imperative.

Njoo ucheze! – Come and play!

Rudi uanze kazi! – Return to start work!

Soma ufanikiwe! – Study to be successful!

4. The Subjunctive is used after expressions of request, obligation and advice such as the following:

tafadhali – please

afadhali – it is better

sharti – it is necessary

heri – it is better

yapasa – it is necessary

lazima – it is necessary

inabidi – it behooves

inafaa – it is suitable

bora – it is better

Examples:

Inabidi mkurufunzi asome kwa bidii. – It behooves the trainee to study hard.

Tafadhali ujibu barua yetu. – Please respond to our letter.

Lazima wawape wagonjwa dawa. – It is necessary that they give the patients the medicine.

5. The Subjunctive is used to express purpose or intention. The word *ili* (so that, in order that) and *kusudi* (in order that, with the intention of) can be used for emphasizing such constructions.

Wajiandae vizuri ili wafaulu mtihani!

Let them prepare themselves well so that they may pass the exam!

Aliomba pesa ili anunue chakula.

He/She asked for money so that he/she can buy food.

Walinitembelea kusudi niwadekeze.

They visited me for the purpose of pampering them.

Please note that verbs of “going and coming” have two ways to express purpose or intention. The first way is to use them with the *ku*-infinitive which is not a subjunctive sentence. The second way is to use a subjunctive verb which must be preceded by *ili* or *kusudi*.

Alirudi kucheza gitaa. – He/She returned to play guitar.

Alirudi ili acheze gitaa. – He/She returned to play guitar.

6. The Subjunctive is used to ask for permission, advice or approval and can use any verb.

Waangalie sinema ipi? – Which movie should they watch?

Wageni wale saa ngapi? – What time should the guests eat?

Nikirudishe lini kitabu cha maktaba? – When should I return the library book?

7. The Subjunctive is used when the subject of the first verb in the sentence is different from the subject of the second verb. The first verb can be a regular verb or subjunctive verb.

Baba alitaka mama asuke mkeka. – Father wanted mother to weave a mat.

Mwuzaji hakutaka wateja waondoke. – The salesperson did not want the clients to leave.

Tupange meza wageni wale. – Let us arrange the table for the guests to eat.

8. The Subjunctive is used to convey a request to oneself, as 1st person singular or plural.

Niseme siri yangu! – Let me tell my secret!

Twende sasa hivi! – Let us go now!

Tusisahau kumwalika! – Let us not forget to invite him/her!

Note that requests to 2nd person singular and plural were taught in Chapter 30.

9. The Subjunctive is used to convey a request to a 3rd party singular or plural by asking a 2nd person singular or plural to convey the request. This must be done by using an object infix.

Umwambie afunge akaunti! – Would you (sing.) tell him/her to close the account(s)!

Mwaambie wasianze mdahalo! – Would you (pl.) tell them not to start the debate!

Uwaombe wanipe kalenda! – Would you (sing.) beg them to give me a calendar!

Note: Negative Subjunctive of the verbs *ambia* and *sema* can be used to imply astonishment as in “No way!”

Usiniambie! – Don’t tell me!

10. When the same Subjunctive verb is used affirmatively and negatively in the same sentence, it forms a question with two possible opposite outcomes.

Nimpige nisimpige? – Should I hit him/her or not?

Ashindane asishindane? – Should he/she compete or not?

11. The Negative Subjunctive is used to convey the meaning of an intention or purpose which has failed.

Tulimtafuta mbwa tusimwone. – We looked for the dog but could not find it.

Aliwapikia chakula kingi wasile. – He/She cooked a lot of food for them but they did not eat.

Waliandikiwa barua wasijibu. – They were written letters but did not respond.

12. The Negative Subjunctive is used after verbs of forbidding, refusing and preventing (*kataza, zuia, kataa, kanya* and *onya*).

PolisiW waliwazuia waandamanaji wasipite. – The police prevented the protestors from passing.

Kijana alikatazwa asicheze nje. – The youth was forbidden from playing outside.

Mama alikataa watoto wasile usiku. – Mother refused to let the children eat at night.

Practice Exercise A

Translate the following into Swahili.

1. I will not lend to him/her until he/she pays you.
2. He/She ordered (forced) me to get him/her life insurance.
3. Stop and think.
4. It is necessary that I send my in-laws presents.
5. I called him/her so that he/she could come.

6. What movie should I watch?
7. His wife wanted him to become a lawyer.
8. Let me brush my teeth before sleeping!
9. Tell him/her to knit me a glove.
10. Should I stay or not?
11. They chased the thief but did not catch him/her.
12. The judge warned me not to drive when I am drunk.

New Vocabulary

- agiza*: order
akaunti: account(s)
amuru: demand
andaa: prepare
baki: stay
bima ya maisha: life insurance
dekeza: pamper
divai: wine(s)
fanikiwa: succeed
gitaa/ma-: guitar(s)
glavu: glove(s)
kalenda: calendar(s)
kanya: forbid, prevent
keti: sit
mafunzo: training
mchanga: sand(s)
mdahalo/mi-: debate(s)
mkurufunzi/wa-: trainee(s)
mkwe/wa-: in-law(s)
mswaki/mi-: toothbrush(es)
mwandamanaji/wa-: protestor(s)
pasua: burst
pendekeza: recommend
puto/ma-: balloon(s)
sharti: it is necessary
suka: weave
winchi: winch(es)

Key to Exercises

Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. *Sitamkopesha mpaka akulipe.*
2. *Alinilazimisha nimpatie bima ya maisha.*
3. *Simama na ufikiri.*
4. *Inabidi niwapelekee wakwe zangu zawadi.*
5. *Nilimpigia simu ili aje.*
6. *Niangalie sinema gani?*
7. *Mke wake alitaka awe mwanasheria.*
8. *Nipige mswaki kabla ya kulala!*
9. *Mwambie anifumie glavu.*
10. *Nibaki nisibaki?*
11. *Walimfukuza mwizi wasimkamate.*
12. *Jaji alinionya nisiendeshe nimelewa.*