

## Chapter 33

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# Additional Tenses and Their Negations

In this Chapter, we will learn how to use the following additional tenses and their negations:

- The Present Indefinite Tense
- The Habitual Tense
- The Already Tense
- The *-nga-* and *-japo-* Tenses

The Present Indefinite Tense is used to state facts and ask questions without reference to a specific time. The Habitual Tense is used in contexts which imply usual practices or truths of a general order which have no specific time reference. In addition, we will cover The Already Tense which is used to show an action that has already taken place as well as learn the uses of the *-nga-* and *-japo-* Tenses.

### Section A: The Present Indefinite Tense

The Present Indefinite Tense is similar to the Present Tense as they are both present tense markers. However, the Present Indefinite Tense which is denoted by *-a-* is used to show an action that takes place periodically. The Present Tense which is denoted by *-na-* shows an action that is in progress at the present moment. Sentences using Present Indefinite Tense markers are constructed in the following manner.

## Personal Subject Prefix + Present Indefinite Tense + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I play,” we do it as follows. We take the Personal Subject Prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We then attach this to the Present Indefinite Tense marker *-a-* and we get *nia-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Niacheza*, conjugated to *Nacheza* which means “I play.” Since the tense marker is a vowel, the conjugation of this tense is done as follows with the M-/WA- class Personal Subject Prefixes.

*Niacheza* becomes *Nacheza* – I play  
*Uacheza* becomes *Wacheza* – You (sing.) play  
*Aacheza* becomes *Acheza* – He/She plays  
*Tuacheza* becomes *Twacheza* – We play  
*Macheza* becomes *Mwacheza* – You (pl.) play  
*Waacheza* becomes *Wacheza* – We play

The other noun classes follow the same pattern as above:

**M-/MI- class**

*Uachoma* becomes *Wachoma* – It burns  
*Iachoma* becomes *Yachoma* – They burn

**JI-/MA- class**

*Liachoma* becomes *Lachoma* – It burns  
*Yaachoma* becomes *Yachoma* – They burn

**KI-/VI- class**

*Kiachoma* becomes *Chachoma* – It burns  
*Viachoma* becomes *Vyachoma* – They burn

**N- class**

*Iachoma* becomes *Yachoma* – It burns  
*Ziachoma* becomes *Zachoma* – They burn

**U- class**

*Uachoma* becomes *Wachoma* – It burns  
*Ziachoma* becomes *Zachoma* – They burn

**PA- class**

*Paachoma* becomes *Pachoma* – It/They (definite) burn(s)

*Kuachoma* becomes *Kwachoma* – It/They (indefinite) burn(s)

*Machoma* becomes *Mwachoma* – It/They (inside) burn(s)

**KU- class**

*Kuachoma* becomes *Kwachoma* – It/They burn(s)

Note that “u” changes to “w” and “i” changes to “y” in the chart above.

Below are examples of Present Indefinite Tense sentences with object prefixes and other Bantu verbs:

*Ndege zaruka mbinguni.* – The airplanes fly in the sky.

*Magari yatumia petroli kwenda.* – Cars use gas to go.

*Roboti yakimbia mita saba.* – The robot runs seven metres.

In the Present Indefinite Tense, Arabic verbs follow the same rules as Bantu verbs. Below are some examples of verbs of Arabic origin:

*Twasahau kununua unga.* – We forget to buy flour.

*Setilaiti yarudi ardhini.* – The satellite returns to the ground.

Monosyllabic verbs drop their infinitive marker *ku-* in sentences using Present Indefinite Tense markers:

*Nala achari.* – I eat pickled condiments.

*Wanywa kahawa chungu.* – You (sing.) drink strong coffee.

When negating a Present Indefinite Tense sentence, we negate it just as we would negate the Present Tense. For example:

*Mimi napika.* – I cook.

*Sipiki.* – I am not cooking.

*Francis aja kanisani.* – Francis comes to the church.

*Francis haji kanisani.* – Francis does not come to the church.

## Practice Exercise A

Translate the following sentences into English.

1. *Napenda kunywa maji ya madafu.*
2. *Dubu yule hatishi watalii.*
3. *Zabibu zahitaji mwanga wa jua kuota.*
4. *Malkia wa Uingereza apenda mapazia ya zambarau.*
5. *Mahali pa kulipa dukani palindwa.*

## Section B: The Habitual Tense

The Habitual Tense which is denoted by the tense marker *hu-* is used to show an action that takes place on a daily basis. It can be translated in English by any of the following adverbs: “usually,” “generally,” or “always.” Unlike most other tenses, the *hu-* tense does not take a subject prefix. In addition, it can be used with a noun from any noun class. It is directly attached to the verb, and if required, an object infix can be inserted between the *hu-* tense marker and the verb. Sentences using *hu-* tense marker are constructed in the following manner.

~~Personal Subject Prefix~~ + Habitual Tense Marker + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I usually play,” we do it as follows. We take the *hu-* Habitual Tense marker and attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *hucheza* which could mean “I usually play.” Since the *hu-* Habitual Tense marker is not prefix specific, the same sentence could be translated for any of the six Personal Subject Prefixes or a Prefix from any other Noun Class in Swahili. *Hucheza* could mean any of the following:

- I usually play.
- We usually play.
- You (sing.) usually play.
- You (pl.) usually play.
- He/She usually plays.
- They usually play.

We can specify the subject of the verb by using an appropriate noun or a Personal Pronoun. For example:

*Mimi hupenda kupika.* – I usually like to cook.

*Mhandisi yule hujenga madaraja.* – That engineer usually builds bridges.

*Mafuriko husambaza magonjwa.* – Floods usually spread diseases.

Arabic verbs are treated in the same manner as Bantu verbs above:

*Wewe husahau kufunga mlango usiku.* – You (sing.) usually forget to lock the door at night.

Monosyllabic verbs drop their *ku-* infinitive when used with the Habitual Tense.

*Yeye hula samaki na mkate kila Ijumaa.* – He/She usually eats fish and bread every Friday.

When negating a Habitual Tense sentence, we negate it just as we would negate a present tense negation. For example:

*Mimi hupika.* – I usually cook.

*Sipiki.* – I usually do not cook.

*Francis huja kanisani.* – Francis usually comes to the church.

*Francis haji kanisani.* – Francis does not usually come to the church.

The Habitual Tense is often used in Swahili proverbs, riddles and common sayings.

Example:

*Haba na haba hujaza kibaba.*

Literally:

Little and little fills the measure. Meaning: Small things, when added together, lead to big things.

## Practice Exercise B

Translate the following sentences into English.

6. *Kinda la ng'ombe hunywa maziwa.*

7. *Mimi hula mboga mchana.*

8. *Shauku nyingi huondoa maarifa.*

9. *Gari hili hutumia petroli nyingi.*
10. *Gari hili halitumii petroli nyingi.*

## Section C: The Already Tense

The Already Tense which is denoted by the tense marker *-mesha-* is used to show an action that has already taken place. Sentences using the *-mesha-* Tense are constructed in the following manner.

Personal Subject Prefix + The *-mesha-* Tense + Verb

If we want to make a simple sentence such as “I have already played,” we do it as follows. We take the personal subject prefix for “I” which is *ni-*. We then attach it to the *-mesha-* Tense and we get *nimesha-*. Finally, we attach this to the verb “play” which is *cheza* and we get *Nimeshacheza* which means “I have already played.”

Using the same method of construction with other Subject Prefixes and Bantu verbs, we get:

*Nimeshamaliza ukurasa wangu.* – I have already completed my page.  
*Imeshanyesha.* – It has already rained.

Arabic verbs are treated in the same manner as Bantu verbs above:

*Wao wameshakubali kumkaribisha mgeni.* – They have already agreed to welcome the guest.

Monosyllabic verbs retain their *ku-* infinitive when used with the *-mesha-* Tense:

*Jua limeshakuchwa.* – The sun has already set.

Note that the *-mesha-* Tense is a contraction of the following:

*-me-* tense + *-isha* “finish” = *-meisha* which is contracted to *-mesha-* which literally means “have finished,” in other words, “is already finished.”

When negating a *-mesha-* Tense sentence, we negate it by using the *-ja-* tense marker as taught in the Past Perfect Tense Negation (see Chapter 6). For example:

*Nimepika.* – I have cooked.

*Nimeshapika.* – I have already cooked.

*Sijapika.* – I have not yet cooked.

### Practice Exercise C

Translate the following sentences into Swahili.

11. The wine glass is already broken.
12. The laundry detergent is not yet finished.
13. I have already finished paying my mortgage.
14. My sister has already seen the financial advisor.
15. The circus has already arrived in town.

### Section D: The *-nga-* and *-japo-* Tense

The *-nga-* and *-japo-* Tenses are commonly translated as “though,” “even though,” “although,” or “even if.” They are not used as regular tense markers in today’s Swahili, except for the specific construction of *ingawa* and *ijapokuwa*. Here are a few sentences using *ingawa* and *ijapokuwa*:

*Ijapokuwa walicheka kwa sauti, mtoto hakuamka.*

Even though they laughed loudly, the child did not wake up.

*Ingawa mnanidharau ninawaheshimu.*

Even though you (pl.) ignore me, I respect you (pl.).

*Ingawa utampa mshahara mkubwa, ataacha kazi.*

Even if you give him/her a large salary, he/she will quit the job.

*Ingawa* and *ijapokuwa* cannot themselves be negated; instead the rest of the sentence can be negated. For example:

*Ingawa hamnidharau siwaheshimu.*

Even though you (pl.) do not ignore me, I do not respect you (pl.).

## Practice Exercise D

Translate the following sentences into Swahili.

16. Although he/she has not completed sewing the sweaters, the customer has already arrived.
17. Although the tree fell, it did not hurt me.
18. Although he is old, he is not yet retired.
19. Even if they win the lottery, they will not be happy.
20. Even though there was an earthquake, many people did not die.

## New Vocabulary

- achari*: pickled condiment(s)  
*bilauri*: drinking glass(es)  
*chungu*: strong, bitter, sharp  
*dafu/ma-*: unripe coconut(s) (with lots of milk)  
*dubu*: bear(s)  
*fua*: launder, forge (metal)  
*haba*: little, few  
*heshimu*: respect, honour  
*ijapokuwa*: although, even though, even if  
*ingawa*: although, even though, even if  
*kanisa/ma-*: church(es)  
*karibisha*: welcome, invite  
*kibaba/vi-*: measuring tin(s)  
*kinda/ma-*: young animal(s)  
*maarifa*: knowledge, understanding  
*malkia*: queen(s) *mbingu*: sky(ies)  
*mshauri/wa-*: advisor(s)  
*mvinyo/mi-*: wine(s)  
*mwanga/mi-*: light(s)  
*pazia/ma-*: curtain(s)  
*rehani*: mortgage(s)  
*roboti*: robot(s)  
*sambaza*: spread  
*sarakasi*: circus(es)  
*setilaiti*: satellite(s)  
*shauku*: eagerness, desire  
*ukurasa/kurasa*: page(s), sheet of paper(s)



*umiza*: hurt

*zabibu*: grape(s), raisin(s)

*zambarau*: plum(s), plum colour (purple)

## Key to Exercises

### Answers to Practice Exercise A

1. I like to drink the water of the coconuts.
2. That bear does not threaten the tourists.
3. The grapes need sunlight to grow.
4. The queen of Great Britain likes purple curtains.
5. The checkout counter is guarded.

### Answers to Practice Exercise B

6. A calf generally drinks milk.
7. I usually eat vegetables in the afternoon.
8. Too much eagerness generally removes understanding.
9. This car generally uses a lot of petrol.
10. This car does not generally use a lot of petrol.

### Answers to Practice Exercise C

11. *Bilauri ya mvinyo imeshavunjika.*
12. *Sabuni ya kufulia haijamalizika.*
13. *Nimeshamaliza kulipa rehani yangu.*
14. *Dada yangu ameshamwona mshauri wa fedha.*
15. *Sarakasi imeshafika mjini.*

### Practice Exercise D

16. *Ijapokuwa hajamaliza kushona sweta, mteja ameshafika.*
17. *Ingawa mti ulianguka, haukuniuza.*
18. *Ijapokuwa yeye ni mzee, hajastaafu.*
19. *Ijapokuwa watashinda bahati nasibu, hawatafurahi.*
20. *Ingawa kulikuwa na tetemeko la ardhi, watu wengi hawakufa.*

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