

Lesson 24:

Adjectives

Adjectives [vivumishi vya sifa]

Adjectives are formed by attaching the noun class marker to an adjectival stem.

Adjectives have various properties:

- Word origin (e.g. Bantu, Arabic)
- Borrowed adjectives which do not have prefixes (i.e. non-Bantu)
- Verbal adjectives

In English, adjectives come before the noun, but in Kiswahili adjectives follow the noun that they describe.

A). Adjectives in Various Noun Classes

- The adjectives below are introduced without any prefix, so that you may recognize them from their roots.
- Adjectives adopt the **prefix that agrees with the noun they qualify**.
- The agreement of the prefixes is identical to the class prefixes of the nouns with which they agree.

Mifano:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. -zuri | [good, nice, beautiful] |
| 2. -baya | [bad] |
| 3. -dogo | [small, little] |
| 4. -kubwa | [big] |
| 5. -ingi | [a lot, many] |
| 6. -chache | [a few, some] |
| 7. -refu | [tall] |
| 8. -fupi | [short] |
| 9. -zee | [old] |
| 10. -pya | [new] |
| 11. -changa | [young] |
| 12. -haba | [few] |
| 13. -tele | [plenty] |

Bi). Adjective Formation

| NGELI [noun class] | JINA [noun] | -ZURI [good] | -BAYA [bad] | -DOGO [small] | -KUBWA [big] |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| M | msichana | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| WA | wasichana | wazuri | wabaya | wadogo | wakubwa |
| KI | kiti | kizuri | kibaya | kidogo | kikubwa |
| VI | viti | vizuri | vibaya | vidogo | vikubwa |
| M | mkono | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| MI | mikono | mizuri | mibaya | midogo | mikubwa |
| JI | gazeti | zuri | baya | dogo | kubwa |
| MA | magazeti | mazuri | mabaya | madogo | makubwa |
| N | ndizi | nzuri | mbaya | ndogo | kubwa |
| N | ndizi | nzuri | mbaya | ndogo | kubwa |
| U | uzi | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| U | nyuzi | nzuri | mbaya | ndogo | kubwa |
| U | uji | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| U | uji | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| KU | kufa | kuzuri | kubaya | kudogo | kukubwa |
| KU | kufa | kuzuri | kubaya | kudogo | kukubwa |
| PA | pahali | pazuri | pabaya | padogo | pakubwa |
| PA | pahali | pazuri | pabaya | padogo | pakubwa |
| MU | darasani | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |
| MU | darasani | mzuri | mbaya | mdogo | mkubwa |

Bii). More Adjective Formation

| NGELI [noun class] | JINA [noun] | -INGI [many] | -CHACHE [few] | -REFU [tall] | -FUPI [short] |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| M | msichana | —— | —— | mrefu | mfupi |
| WA | wasichana | wengi | wachache | warefu | wafupi |
| KI | kiti | —— | —— | kirefu | kifupi |
| VI | viti | vingi | vichache | virefu | vifupi |
| M | mkono | —— | —— | mrefu | mfupi |
| MI | mikono | mingi | michache | mirefu | mifupi |
| JI | gazeti | —— | —— | refu | fupi |
| MA | magazeti | mengi | machache | marefu | mafupi |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| N | ndizi | — | — | nrefu | fupi |
| N | ndizi | nyingi | chache | nrefu | fupi |
| U | uzi | — | — | mrefu | mfupi |
| U | nyuzi | nyingi | chache | nrefu | fupi |
| U | uji | mwingi | — | mrefu | mfupi |
| U | uji | mwingi | — | mrefu | mfupi |
| KU | kufa | kwingi | kuchache | kurefu | kufupi |
| KU | kufa | kwingi | kuchache | kurefu | kufupi |
| PA | pahali | pengi | pachache | parefu | pafupi |
| PA | pahali | pengi | pachache | parefu | pafupi |
| MU | darasani | mwingi | mchache | mrefu | mfupi |
| MU | darasani | mwingi | mchache | mrefu | mfupi |

C). Adjectives with Bantu origin

| | | | |
|----------|-----------------|---------|----------|
| -anana | [gentle/kindly] | -ke | [female] |
| -baya | [bad] | -kubwa | [big] |
| -bichi | [unripe] | -kuu | [great] |
| -bivu | [ripe] | -kuukuu | [old] |
| -bovu | [bad] | -moja | [one] |
| -chache | [few] | -nene | [big] |
| -choyo | [stingy/mean] | -nono | [fat] |
| -dogo | [small] | -ororo | [soft] |
| -ekundu | [red] | -ovu | [evil] |
| -ema | [fine] | -pana | [wide] |
| -embamba | [thin/slender] | -pya | [new] |
| -epesi | [light] | -refu | [tall] |
| -erevu | [clever] | -tamu | [sweet] |
| -eupe | [white] | -tupu | [empty] |
| -eusi | [black] | -ume | [male] |
| -fupi | [short] | -vivu | [weak] |
| -geni | [new] | -zee | [old] |
| -gumu | [hard] | -zima | [whole] |
| -kali | [fierce] | -zito | [heavy] |
| -kavu | [dry] | -zuri | [good] |
| -katili | [mean] | | |

D). Adjectives with non-Bantu origin

➤ These borrowed adjectives do not have prefixes

| | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| bora | [suitable] |
| safi | [clean] |
| nadhifu | [clean/smart] |
| dhalili | [weak/feable] |
| duni | [insignificant person/lowly] |
| rahisi | [cheap] |
| ghali | [expensive/exorbitant] |
| baridi | [cold] |
| hodari | [skilled] |
| tele | [abundant] |
| kamili | [exact] |
| haba | [rare] |
| muhimu | [important] |
| shujaa | [brave] |
| stadi | [steadfast] |
| bingwa | [winner/victor] |

E). Verbal Adjectives

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| -angavu | [bright] |
| -vumilivu | [persevering] |
| -changamfu | [happy] |
| -tulivu | [calm] |
| -tukufu | [excellency] |
| -dhaifu | [weak] |
| -takatifu | [holy] |
| -nyamavu | [silent] |
| -kunjufu | [pure (heart)] |
| -potovu | [wayward] |

Sentence Formation

Mifano:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Mtoto mzuri mdogo amelala. | [The good, small child has slept.] |
| Watoto wazuri wadogo wamelala. | [The good, small children have slept.] |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2. Mzigo mdogo ni mzuri. | [Small luggage is good.] |
| Mizigo midogo ni mizuri. | [Small luggage bags are good.] |
| 3. Chakula bora kimepikwa. | [The good food has been cooked.] |
| Vyakula bora vimepikwa. | [The suitable foods have been cooked.] |
| Mifano zaidi: | |
| a). chakula kizuri | [good food] |
| b). mwanafunzi mbaya | [bad student] |
| c). mlima mdogo | [small mountain] |
| d). bahari kubwa | [big ocean] |
| e). watu wengi | [a lot/many people] |
| f). matofaa machache | [few apples] |
| g). mchezaji mrefu | [tall athlete] |
| h). viti vifupi | [short chairs] |