Lesson 55: Subjunctive

Subjunctives are a polite form of the verb used in giving suggestions, giving directions and directives, and asking for things.

A). Subjunctive

In Kiswahili, changing the final -A into -E in a verb will form the subjunctive.

Mifano:

1. Afadhali ulale sasa.
   [It is better if you sleep now.]
2. Ni vizuri/muhimu mtoto apige mswaki.
   [It is good/important that the child brushes his/her teeth.]

Zingatia [Note]

Verb stems ending in vowels other than -A (e.g. -fikiri [think]) do not change when forming subjunctive.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fikiri</td>
<td>nifikiri</td>
<td>[I should think]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safiri</td>
<td>nisafiri</td>
<td>[I should travel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fuzu</td>
<td>mfuzu</td>
<td>[you (pl.) should graduate]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shukuru</td>
<td>tushukuru</td>
<td>[we should be grateful/thankful]</td>
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B). Uses of the Subjunctive

1. Making suggestions
   - Astarehe. [He/She should relax/be comfortable.]
   - Usamehe. [You should forgive.]

2. As the second part of two commands (to the same person)
   - Fungua kitabu usome. [Open the book and read it.]
   - Chukua kalamu na uandike barua. [Take a pen and write a letter.]

3. Giving indirect commands (for ‘you’ to do to another)
   - Mfundishe Kiswahili. [Teach her/him Kiswahili.]
   - Mwamkie mtoto. [Greet the child.]

4. Giving direct commands (for someone to do to another)
   - Tuwafundishe Kimaasai. [Let’s teach them the Maasai language.]
   - Uwashukuru wazee. [You should thank the elders.]
   - Wakisome kitabu. [They should read the book.]

C). Words that trigger the Subjunctive

There are a number of words that require a subjunctive form to follow them: words which indicate **obligation** or **compulsion**.

| 1. lazima      | [must]       | Lazima uandike barua. [You must write a letter.] |
| 2. ili         | [so that]    | Soma ili uelewe. [Read so that you may understand.] |
| 3. sharti      | [compels, behooves] | Ukitaka cha mvunguni sharti uiname. [If you want to reach for something under the bed, you should/it compels you to stoop for it.] |
| 4. bidi        | [requires, compels] | Itakubidi ujifunze Kiswahili. [It compels you to study Kiswahili.] |
### D). Negation of the Subjunctive

To negate the subjunctive verb in Kiswahili, **-SI-** is inserted.

#### Mifano:

1. **Nionje**  
   **Ni-si-onj-e**  
   [I should taste]  
   [I should not taste]

2. **Wacheze.**  
   **Wasicheze.**  
   [They should play.]  
   [They should not play.]

3. **Tule.**  
   **Tusile.**  
   [We should eat.]  
   [We should not eat.]

4. **Achukue**  
   **Asichukue**  
   [He/She should take]  
   [He/She should not take]

5. **Mzungumze.**  
   **Msizungumze.**  
   [You (pl.) should speak.]  
   [You (pl.) should not speak.]

6. **Tufundishe.**  
   **Tusifundishe.**  
   [We should teach.]  
   [We should not teach.]

### E). Negation Uses

1. **As the second part of two commands for the person spoken to**
   a). **Usipike chakula ule.**  
      [You should not cook the food and eat.]
   b). **Msichukue karatasi mtunge mashairi.**  
      [You (pl.) should not take the papers and compose poems.]

2. **Indirect commands** (telling someone not to do something)
   a). **Tusiwafundishe Kimaasai.**  
      [We should not teach them the Maasai language.]
   b). **Usiwashukuru wazee.**  
      [You should not thank the elders.]
   c). **Wasikisome kitabu.**  
      [They should not read the book.]