The Grammar Basics of Kabwa
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Contents

About Kabwa

Kabwa is a Bantu language, classified by Maho (2003) as E405 (J), spoken in the Mara Region of Tanzania. The ISO code is [cwa] (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2016).

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to be a very basic reference to the common morphosyntactic structures of Kabwa. Though we hope that other linguists will be able to make use of it, its primary purpose is to help non-linguists (who have at least a small amount of linguistic training) who are working with the language, e.g. literacy workers, translators, translation consultants, spell-checkers, etc. For this reason, unless otherwise noted, data is written in the Kabwa orthography, with the aim that it is more accessible to our intended audience.

A note about the Kabwa Orthography

There are only five vowel phonemes in Kabwa, as well as nineteen consonants. Graphemes for these are shown below, along with the phonemes which they represent.

Table 1: Kabwa vowel graphemes and corresponding phonemes

Graphemes	i	e	a	o	u
Phonemes	i	ɛ	ɑ	ɔ	u

Table 2: Kabwa consonant graphemes and corresponding phonemes[2]

Graphemes	bh[3]	d	f	g	h	j	k	m	n	ng'	ny[4]	p	r	s	sh	t	w	y
Phonemes	β	d	f	g	h	d͡ʒ	k	m	n	ŋ	ɲ	p	r	s	ʃ	t	w	j

Note that all five vowel phonemes have long vowel counterparts. There is both contrastive and conditioned vowel length, but only contrastive length is written. See the *Kabwa Orthography Statement* for more detail.

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[2] The consonants **d** (except when prenasalized as **nd**), **f**, **p** and **sh** are found only in borrowed words.

[3] When **bh** is prenasalised is is hardened to a **b** and is written as **b** in this environment.

[4] Kabwa uses the trigraph **n'y** for the palatalised alveolar nasal [nʲ] to differentiate from the palatal nasal [ɲ] which is written **ny**. The palatalised palatal nasal [ɲʲ] is written **nyi**.

1. Noun classes

Kabwa nouns usually consist of an augment vowel, a noun class (NC) prefix and a noun stem. There are no vowel harmony alternations for noun class augments or prefixes in Kabwa.

Table 3: Kabwa noun class prefixes

NC	Prefix[5]	Example word	English gloss
1	**omu-**	**omu**rimi	farmer
1a	∅	tata	father
2	**abha-**	**abha**rimi	farmers
2a	**bha-**	**bha**tata	fathers
3	**omu-**	**omu**tana	beehive
4	**emi-**	**emi**tana	beehives
5	**eri-**	**eri**guha	bone
5a	**ri-**	**ri**nyamuhu[6]	(large) spitting cobra
6	**ama-**	**ama**guha	bones
7	**eki-**	**eki**geso	knife
8	**ebhi-**	**ebhi**geso	knives
9	**eN-**	**en**koko	chicken
9a	**e-**	**e**matoka	car
9b	**∅ / e-**	(**e**)nyamuhu[7]	spitting cobra
10	**egiN-**	**egin**koko	chickens
10a	**egi-**	**egi**matoka	cars
10b	**gi-**	**gi**nyamuhu	spitting cobras
11	**oru-**	**oru**sara	roof
12	**aka-**	**aka**tine	piece
14	**obhu-**	**obhu**riri	bed
15	**oku-**	**oku**bhoko	hand
16	**aha-**	**aha**si	place
17	**ku-**	**ku**mutana	at the beehive

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[5] The word "prefix" is used here to denote the augment and the prefix combined.
[6] Some speakers use **rinyamuhu** as a synonym for **gunyamuhu** (class 20), which are two different ways to form an augmentative.
[7] The singular form **nyamuhu** is often pronounced without the augment vowel; however, some speakers do pronounce the augment. The plural form **ginyamuhu** never has an augment vowel.

18	**mu-**	**mu**mutana	in the beehive
20	**gu-**	**gu**nyamuhu	(large) spitting cobra
22	**ga-**	**ga**nyamuhu	(large) spitting cobras
23	**i-**	**i**ika	at home

Usual singular-plural pairings include: 1/2, 1a/2a, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 9a/10a, 9b/10b, 11/10, 12/8 (diminutive), 14/6, 15/6, and 20/22 (augmentative) (or 5a/22 (augmentative)).

Class 17 and 18 locatives are prefixed to nouns in other classes.[8] This causes the augment vowel to elide, as seen in the chart above (**omutana** 'beehive', but **kumutana** 'at the beehive'). When they occur with a class 5 noun, the prefix consonant **r** elides in speech, causing the locatives to desyllabify before the remaining prefix **i-**. This elision is written. For example, when the class 17 locative is added to a noun like **eriguha** 'bone' it becomes **kwiguha**.

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[8] There is also an adverbial/prepositional **ku** that looks similar to the class 17 locative. This adverbial is written disjunctively from the following noun.

2. Personal pronouns and their agreement

The following table lists the personal pronouns and their subject and object agreement prefixes (with some of the surface variation of these prefixes)[9]. The final column lists the possessive pronoun root for each person and number.

Table 4: Kabwa pronouns and verbal prefix agreement

Person	Personal pronoun	Subject prefix	Object prefix	Possessive
1SG	oni	n- / m- / ng'-[10]	n- / m- / ng'- / ny-[11]	-ani
2SG	uwe	o- / w-[12]	ku- / kw-	-aho
3SG	weeki	a- / ya-[13]	mu- / mw-	-aye
1PL	bheetu	tu- / tw-	tu- / tw-	-etu
2PL	bheenyu	mu- / mw-	bha-	-enyu
3PL	bheeki	bha-	bha-	-abho

There is no distinction between 2PL and 3PL in the object marker. If disambiguation is needed, the corresponding explicit pronoun, **bheenyu** or **bheeki**, is added.

There is also a set of emphatic copular pronouns, shown in the following table:

Table 5: Kabwa emphatic pronouns

1SG	nooni	it is I	**1PL**	mbeetu	it is WE
2SG	nuuwe	it is YOU	**2PL**	mbeenyu	it is YOU (PL)
3SG	ng'o	it is HE/SHE	**3PL**	mbo	it is THEY

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[9] The surface variations are usually a result of vowel hiatus resolution, which can cause glide formation, vowel assimilation and/or coalescence. Surface variations are not listed in the remainder of this document. See the Kabwa Orthography Statement for more details.

[10] The **n-** surfaces when immediately preceding any non-labial consonant (except for some cases of **h**) and when preceding vowels; the **m-** form of the subject prefix surfaces when immediately preceding another labial sound (**bh** or **m**); the **ng'-** surfaces inconsistently when immediately preceding an underlying **h** (in these cases **h** elides. The only root which consistently elides is **haana** 'give', which gives **ng'aane** 'I should give').

[11] The **n-**, **m-** and **ng'-** forms of the object prefix surface in the same environments as for the subject prefix, except that **ny-** surfaces when immediately preceding a vowel.

[12] The **w-** form surfaces prior to vowels, due to labialization, on 2SG, 1PL, and 2PL subject prefixes and on 2SG, 3SG, and 1PL object prefixes.

[13] The **ya-** variation surfaces by glide insertion to prevent word-initial long vowels. This affects many verb forms, including the Imperative, Subjunctive, and all Past tenses.

3. Noun class agreement

The following table shows the adjectival prefixes for each class, as well as the corresponding pronominal, enumerative and verbal agreement prefixes. The adjectival prefix is used for nouns and adjectives. The pronominal prefix is used for a variety of pronominal forms (§3.1), associatives (§3.2), possessives (§3.3), and demonstratives (§3.4). The enumerative prefix is used for agreement on numerals (§3.5) and the 'how many' form (§3.1).

Table 6: Kabwa noun class agreement for various types of modifiers

NC	Adjectival[14]	Pronominal	Enumerative	Subject	Object
1	(o)mu-	(o)u-	u-	a-	mu-
2	(a)bha-	(a)bha-	bha-	bha-	bha-
3	(o)mu-	(o)gu-	gu-	gu-	gu-
4	(e)mi-	(e)gi-	e-	gi-	gi-
5	(e)ri-	(e)ri-	ri-	ri-	ri-
6	(a)ma-	(a)ga-	a-/ ga-[15]	ga-	ga-
7	(e)ki-	(e)ki-	ki-	ki-	ki-
8	(e)bhi-	(e)bhi-	bhi-	bhi-	bhi-
9	(e)N-/ e-	(e)i-	(e)i-	e-	i-[16]
10	(e)giN-/ (e)gi-	(e)gi-	e-	gi-	gi-
11	(o)ru-	(o)ru-	ru-	ru-	ru-
12	(a)ka-	(a)ka-	ka-	ka-	ka-
14	(o)bhu-	(o)bhu-	bhu-	bhu-	bhu-
15	(o)ku-	(o)ku-	ku-	ku-	ku-
16	(a)ha-	(a)ha-	ha-	ha-	ha-
17[17]	ku-	ku-	-	-	-
18	mu-	mu-	-	-	-
20	gu-	(o)gu-	gu-	gu-	gu-
22	ga-	(a)ga-	ga-	ga-	ga-
23[18]	i-	(o)u-/ e-[19]	-	-	-

Note that each of the prefixes with a non-low vowel is subject to glide formation, and the prefixes with low vowels are subject to assimilation with the following stem vowel.

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[14] Adjectival forms agreeing with a noun sometimes do not include the augment vowel.

[15] For class 6 numerals the **ga-** prefix is used, but for the 'how many' form both **a-** and **ga-** are possible.

[16] The class 9 object prefix is orthographically **i-**, but it does not coalesce with a preceding **a-** (to form **ee** as any other **a-i** sequence would).

[17] The locative classes 17 and 18 do not have enumerative, subject, or object prefixes.

[18] A limited number of words take class 23 agreement (including demonstratives, possessive pronouns and associatives), but many other pronominal forms take class 16 agreement even when referring to a class 23 noun. In some of the tables below, footnotes are used to indicate this extended usage of class 16 agreement.

[19] The two distinctly shaped prefixes for class 23 are not fully understood. Associatives and possessive pronouns use the prefix **(o)u-**, while demonstratives use the prefix **e-**.

3.1 Quantificational, set and interrogative pronouns

The following four pronouns (quantificational **-onse**, set pronouns **-ene** and **-ndi**, and interrogative **-Vha**) take the pronominal prefix. The set pronouns also take an augment vowel. The interrogative **-ringa** 'how many' is also listed, which takes the enumerative prefix.

Table 7: Kabwa quantificational, set and interrogative pronouns

NC	-onse 'also'[20]	-ene 'self'	-ndi 'other'	-Vha 'which'	-ringa 'how many'
1	wonse	omwene[21]	oundi	uuha	
2	bhonse	abheene[22]	abhandi	bhaaha	bharinga
3	gwonse	ogwene	ogundi	guuha	
4	gyonse	egyene	egindi	giiha	eringa
5	ryonse	eryene	erindi	riiha	
6	gonse	ageene	agandi	gaaha	aringa / garinga
7	kyonse	ekyene	ekindi	kiiha	
8	bhyonse	ebhyene	ebhindi	bhiiha	bhiringa
9	yonse	eyeene	eindi	iiha	
10	gyonse	egyene	egindi	giiha	eringa
11	rwonse / ronse	orwene	orundi	ruuha	
12	konse	akeene	akandi	kaaha	
14	bhwonse / bhonse	obhwene	obhundi	bhuuha	
15	kwonse / konse	okwene	okundi	kuuha	
16[23]	honse	aheene	ahandi	aha / ha[24]	haringa
20	gwonse	ogwene	ogundi	guuha	
22	gonse	ageene	agandi	gaaha	garinga

3.2 Associatives

Kabwa associatives have the final vowel **-a**, which is typical of associatives in many Bantu languages. In fast speech, the final **-a** of the associatives elides before the augment vowel of the following noun, but the orthography preserves the underlying form of the associative. The chart below shows the associatives for each noun class, except for classes 17 and 18, since agreement for locative nouns always follows the class of the original noun, not the class of the locative.

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[20] Though historically this form meant 'whole' or 'all', these meanings have become secondary, and this pronoun only takes on this meaning when it is followed by the adverb **ego** (literally 'thusly'). For example, in class 2, the lexicalized form **bhonsego** means 'all'. In current speech, when the –**onse** form occurs by itself, the primary meaning is 'they also'.

[21] The class 1 form **omwene** is irregular, since it takes the adjectival prefix **omu-** instead of the pronominal prefix **(o)u-**.

[22] The class 1 and class 2 forms **omwene** and **abheene** are sometimes used in place of the 3ʳᵈ person personal pronouns **weeki** and **bheeki**.

[23] None of the forms in this table have distinct class 23 agreement. Instead, these class 16 pronouns can also be used for class 23 referents.

[24] The class 16 interrogative form is exceptional in not taking the usual class 16 pronominal prefix **aha-**.

Occasionally an associative takes an augment vowel, which seems to be required when the associative is not immediately preceded by the noun it agrees with. In this case, the augment of the associative is written.

Table 8: Kabwa associatives

NC	Associative	NC	Associative
1	(o)wa	10	(e)gya
2	(a)bha	11	(o)rwa
3	(o)gwa	12	(a)ka
4	(e)gya	14	(o)bhwa
5	(e)rya	15	(o)kwa
6	(a)ga	16	(a)ha
7	(e)kya	20	(o)gwa
8	(e)bhya	22	(a)ga
9	(e)ya	23	(o)wa

3.3   Possessive Pronouns

There are six possessive pronoun forms for classes 1 and 2, and each form is listed below showing agreement for each noun class.

Table 9: Kabwa possessive pronouns

NC	1SG 'my' -ani	2SG 'your' -aho	3SG 'his' -aye	1PL 'our' -etu	2PL 'your' -enyu	3PL 'their' -abho
1	(o)waani	(o)waaho	(o)waaye	(o)weetu	(o)weenyu	(o)waabho
2	(a)bhaani	(a)bhaaho	(a)bhaaye	(a)bheetu	(a)bheenyu	(a)bhaabho
3	(o)gwani	(o)gwaho	(o)gwaye	(o)gwetu	(o)gwenyu	(o)gwabho
4	(e)gyani	(e)gyaho	(e)gyaye	(e)gyetu	(e)gyenyu	(e)gyabho
5	(e)ryani	(e)ryaho	(e)ryaye	(e)ryetu	(e)ryenyu	(e)ryabho
6	(a)gaani	(a)gaaho	(a)gaaye	(a)geetu	(a)geenyu	(a)gaabho
7	(e)kyani	(e)kyaho	(e)kyaye	(e)kyetu	(e)kyenyu	(e)kyabho
8	(e)bhyani	(e)bhyaho	(e)bhyaye	(e)bhyetu	(e)bhyenyu	(e)bhyabho
9	(e)yaani	(e)yaaho	(e)yaaye	(e)yeetu	(e)yeenyu	(e)yaabho
10	(e)gyani	(e)gyaho	(e)gyaye	(e)gyetu	(e)gyenyu	(e)gyabho
11	(o)rwani	(o)rwaho	(o)rwaye	(o)rwetu	(o)rwenyu	(o)rwabho
12	(a)kaani	(a)kaaho	(a)kaaye	(a)keetu	(a)keenyu	(a)kaabho
14	(o)bhwani	(o)bhwaho	(o)bhwaye	(o)bhwetu	(o)bhwenyu	(o)bhwabho
15	(o)kwani	(o)kwaho	(o)kwaye	(o)kwetu	(o)kwenyu	(o)kwabho
16	(a)haani	(a)haaho	(a)haaye	(a)heetu	(a)heenyu	(a)haabho
20	(o)gwani	(o)gwaho	(o)gwaye	(o)gwetu	(o)gwenyu	(o)gwabho
22	(a)gaani	(a)gaaho	(a)gaaye	(a)geetu	(a)geenyu	(a)gaabho
23	(o)waani	(o)waaho	(o)waaye	(o)weetu	(o)weenyu	(o)waabho

Occasionally a possessive takes an augment vowel, which seems to be required when the possessive is not immediately preceded by the noun it agrees with. In this case, the augment of the possessive is written. Some examples are shown below, glossed literally:

abhariisya bhaani na <u>abhaaho</u>   'shepherds mine and <u>yours</u>'
ekyaro kinu kibhe <u>ekyaye</u>   'country this should be <u>his</u>'

There are also possessive pronoun roots which agree with possessors for each noun class, shown in the table below.

Table 10: Kabwa possessive pronoun roots

NC	Possessive pronoun root	NC	Possessive pronoun root
1	-aye	10	-agyo
2	-abho	11	-aro
3	-agwo	12	-ako
4	-agyo	14	-ako
5	-aryo	15	-ako
6	-ago	16	-aho
7	-akyo	20	-ago
8	-abhyo	22	-ago
9	-ayo	23	- [25]

These possessor roots can be paired with each and every class agreement prefix, thus allowing these pronouns to agree with the class of both the possessor and the possessed. The examples below show firstly a phrase with two nouns joined by an associative, followed by the phrase with the appropriate possessive:

eriguha rya enkoko   'the bone (cl.5) of the chicken (cl.9)'
eriguha <u>ryayo</u>   'bone (cl.5) it's (cl.9)'
ekigeso kya okubhoko   'the knife (cl.7) of the hand (cl.15)'
ekigeso <u>kyako</u>   'knife (cl.7) it's (cl.15)'

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[25] It is not possible to have a possessive root agreeing with class 23 **iika** 'nyumbani' 'at home'; one instead would use the possessive for **enyumba** 'home'.

3.4   Demonstratives

There are three types of demonstratives in Kabwa, and each type agrees with the class of the noun that it modifies.

Table 10: Kabwa demonstratives

NC	Proximal (near)	Referential	Distal (far)
1	unu	uyo	urya
2	bhanu	bhayo	bharya
3	gunu	guyo	gurya
4	ginu	giyo	girya
5	rinu	riyo	rirya
6	ganu	gayo	garya
7	kinu	kiyo	kirya
8	bhinu	bhiyo	bhirya
9	inu	iyo	irya
10	ginu	giyo	girya
11	runu	ruyo	rurya
12	kanu	kayo	karya
14	bhunu	bhuyo	bhurya
15	kunu	kuyo	kurya
16	hanu	hayo	harya
17	kunu	kuyo	kurya
18	munu	muyo	murya
20	gunu	guyo	gurya
22	ganu	gayo	garya
23	enu[26]	eyo	erya

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[26] It is grammatical also for class 16 demonstratives to be used in agreement with a class 23 noun.

3.5 Numerals

The following table shows numerals as they are inflected for noun classes 1-10 and class 12. The numerals 7, 8, 9 and 10 are invariable. Class 12 is used for general counting.

Table 11: Kabwa numeral agreement for 1-10

NC / Num	1/2	3/4	5/6	7/8	9/10	12
1	oumwi	gumwi	rimwi	kimwi	eimwi	kamwi
2	bhabhiri	ebhiri	gabhiri	bhibhiri	ebhiri	kabhiri
3	bhasatu	esatu	gasatu	bhisatu	esatu	kasatu
4	bhane	ena	gane	bhina	ena	kane
5	bhataanu	etaanu	gataanu	bhitaanu	etaanu	kataanu
6	bhasansabha	esansabha	gasansabha	bhisansabha	esansabha	kasansabha
7	muhungati	muhungati	muhungati	muhungati	muhungati	muhungati
8	munaane	munaane	munaane	munaane	munaane	munaane
9	kenda	kenda	kenda	kenda	kenda	kenda
10	ekumi	ekumi	ekumi	ekumi	ekumi	ekumi/ erikumi
11	ekumi na umwi	ekumi na gumwi	ekumi na rimwi	ekumi na kimwi	ekumi na imwi	ekumi na kamwi
14	ekumi na bhane	ekumi na ena	ekumi na gane	ekumi na bhina	ekumi na ena	ekumi na kane

Additional numerals, with class 9/10 inflection, are as follows:

Table 12: Selected Kabwa numeral agreement

20	mirongo ebhiri
21	mirongo ebhiri na imwi
30	mirongo esatu
40	mirongo ena
50	mirongo etaanu
60	mirongo esansabha
100	erigana (rimwi)
1000	ekiku (kimwi)

Ordinal numbers are formed with an associative construction, as the following chart shows for agreement with class 9:

Table 13: Kabwa ordinal numbers 1-10

1st	ya okwamba[27]	6th	ya kasansabha
2nd	ya kabhiri	7th	ya muhungati
3rd	ya kasatu	8th	ya munaane
4th	ya kane	9th	ya kenda
5th	ya kataanu	10th	ya ekumi

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[27] The Kabwa also use the phrase **ya embere** for first (literally 'frontmost'). However, **ya okwamba** is preferred by reviewers as the 'more correct' form.

4. Tense/Aspect/Mood

This section lists Kabwa verb forms, beginning with basic (single-word) forms, followed by negative forms, copular forms and some multi-word forms.

4.1 Basic forms

Kabwa has many verbal forms, several of which have overlapping functions as both a tense and an aspect. There are three past tenses, though the near past also functions as an anterior aspect. There are three future tenses, though the Immediate Future can also function as the Inceptive aspect. There is also the Progressive aspect that functions as a present tense, as well as the Narrative tense and several other aspects and moods. These are all illustrated below with the 3PL subject prefix **bha-** and the verbs 'dig' and 'begin'. For each example, the first line shows the orthographic form, the second shows the constituent morphemes of each form, and the third gives a gloss for each morpheme. The template columns show the combination of affixes which make up each verb form, including the subject agreement prefix (SBJ) and the verb root (R). For another look at Kabwa verbs, including information on grammatical tone, see Aunio et al. (forthcoming) and Walker (2013).

TAM	Template	simba 'dig'	amba 'begin'
Remote Past (P$_3$)	SBJ-**a**^{28}-R-**a**	**bhaasimba**	**bhaamba**
		bha-a-simb-a	bha-a-amb-a
		3PL-P3-dig-FV	3PL-P3-begin-FV
		'they dug (before yesterday)'	'they began (before yesterday)'

*Note that P$_3$ and the General Present tense (see below) are segmentally identical. The general present tense, however, is very rare, and these two verb forms are identical orthographically.

TAM	Template	simba 'dig'	amba 'begin'
Yesterday's Past (P$_2$)	SBJ-**a**-R-**iri**	**bhaasimbiri**	**bhaambiri**
		bha-a-simb-iri	bha-a-amb-iri
		3PL-P2-dig-PST	3PL-P2-begin-PST
		'they dug (yesterday)'	'they began (yesterday)'

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[28] Some have considered this past tense prefix vowel to be underlying long (Walker 2013). However, for the orthography and all other practical purposes it is treated as short, here and throughout the rest of the document. This applies to the **a-** prefix which is part of the Remote Past form (SBJ-**a**-R-**a**), as well as the Yesterday's Past form (SBJ-**a**-R-**iri**).

TAM	Template	simba 'dig'	amba 'begin'
Anterior (ANT) / Today's Past (P₁)	SBJ-R-**iri**	**bhasimbiri** bha-simb-iri 3PL-dig-ANT 'they have dug' / 'they dug (earlier today)'	**bhaambiri** bha-amb-iri 3PL-begin-ANT 'they have begun' / 'they began (earlier today)'

*This form functions as an Anterior, both in single-word and compound constructions. It is also considered to be a near past, since it is the only form which can be used to refer to completed events earlier in the day of speaking. Also, note that P₁/ANT and P₂ can be distinguished only by vowel length, though there are some forms (e.g. those with vowel-initial verb roots) in which this length contrast is neutralized, and P₁ and P₂ are identical, both phonetically and orthographically.

General Present (PRS)	SBJ-**a**-R-**a**	**bhaasimba** bha-a-simb-a 3PL-PRS-dig-FV 'they dig'	**bhaamba** bha-a-amb-a 3PL-PRS-begin-FV 'they begin'

*The General Present is very rare.

Remote Future (F₃)	SBJ-**ri**-R-**a**	**bharisimba** bha-ri-simb-a 3PL-F₃-dig-FV 'they will dig (after tomorrow)'	**bharyamba** bha-ri-amb-a 3PL-F₃-begin-FV 'they will begin (after tomorrow)'
Middle Future (F₂)	SBJ-**aka**-R-**e**	**bhaakasimbe** bha-aka-simb-e 3PL-F₂-dig-FV 'they will dig (today or tomorrow)'	**bhaakaambe** bha-aka-amb-e 3P-INCE-begin-FV 'they will begin (today or tomorrow)'
Inceptive (INCE)/ Immediate Future (F₁)	SBJ-**raa**-R-**e**	**bharaasimbe** bha-raa-simb-e 3PL-INCE-dig-FV 'they are about to dig' / 'they will dig (soon)'	**bharaambe** bha-raa-amb-e 3P-INCE-begin-FV 'they are about to begin' / 'they will begin (soon)'
Narrative (NAR)	SBJ-**ka**-R-**a**	**bhakasimba** bha-ka-simb-a 3PL-NAR-dig-FV '(and then) they dug'	**bhakaamba** bha-ka-amb-a 3PL-NAR-begin-FV '(and then) they began'
Progressive (PROG)	SBJ-**ra**-R-**a**	**bharasimba** bha-ra-simb-a 3PL-PROG-dig-FV 'they are digging'	**bharaamba** bha-ra-amb-a 3PL-PROG-begin-FV 'they are beginning'

*This form acts as a Progressive aspect in the Present tense when it stands alone. In combination with Past or Future tenses in a multi-word form, it indicates Past or Future Progressive (§4.4).

Habitual (HAB)	SBJ-**ra**-R-**anga** (in present tense)	**bharasimbanga** bha-ra-simb-anga 3PL-PROG-dig-HAB 'they (usually) dig'	**bharaambanga** bha-ra-amb-anga 3PL-PROG-begin-HAB 'they (usually) begin'

*The -**anga** suffix can also be used with other tenses (e.g. **bhaasimbanga** 'they (usually) dug'). This Past Habitual has extended usage as a Past Progressive, although, as §4.4 shows, there is also a multi-word verb form for Past Progressive.

Persistive (PERS)	SBJ-**kya**-R-**a**	**bhakyasimba** bha-kya-simb-a 3PL-PERS-dig-FV 'they still dig'	**bhakyaamba** bha-kya-amb-a 3PL-PERS-begin-FV 'they are still beginning'

Hypothetical (HYP)	SBJ-**kaa**-R-**iri**	**bhakaasimbiri** bha-kaa-simb-iri 3PL-HYP-dig-FV 'if they were to dig'	**bhakaambiri** bha-kaa-amb-iri 3PL-HYP-begin-FV 'if they were to begin'

Potential (POT)	SBJ-**kaa**-R-**a**	**bhakaasimba** bha-kaa-simb-a 3PL-POT-dig-FV 'they might dig'	**bhakaamba** bha-kaa-amb-a 3PL-POT-begin-FV 'they might begin'

*This Potential form is very infrequent in texts, occasionally found in phrases such as 'if he wishes' **akaahanja** (Swahili '[Bwana Yesu] akipenda'). Therefore, even though in cases of vowel-initial stems the form is identical to the Narrative, there does not seem to be any confusion. The sense of the conditional or potential is more often expressed with **nyoore** 'if' followed by the Inceptive SBJ-**raa**-R-**e**.

Subjunctive (SBJV)	SBJ-R-**e**	**bhasimbe** bha-simb-e 3PL-dig-SBJV 'they should dig'	**bhaambe** bha-amb-e 3PL-begin-SBJV 'they should begin'

Imperative (IMP)	R-**a**	**simba** simb-a dig-FV 'dig!'	**yamba**[29] amb-a begin-FV 'begin!'

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[29] Most vowel-initial stems require word-initial glide insertion in the Imperative.

Infinitive (INF)	oku-R-a	okusimba	okwamba
		oku-simb-a	oku-amb-a
		INF-dig-FV	INF-begin-FV
		'to dig'	'to begin'

4.2   Negative verbs

Negative verbal constructions usually involve the prefix **ta-**, which occurs after the subject prefix but before the TAM prefix. The most basic negative forms are listed below, alongside their affirmative counterparts.

Table 14: Kabwa negatives

	Affirmative		Negative	
P₃	bhaagura bha-a-gur-a	'they bought (before yesterday)'	bhataagura bha-ta-a-gur-a	'they did not buy (before yesterday)'
P₂	bhaaguriri bha-a-gur-iri	'they bought (yesterday)'	bhataaguriri bha-ta-a-gur-iri	'they did not buy (yesterday)'
ANT/ P₁	bhaguriri bha-gur-iri	'they have bought'	bhataguriri bha-ta-gur-iri	'they have not bought'
PROG	bharagura bha-ra-gur-a	'they are buying'	bhatakugura bha-ta-ku-gur-a	'they are not buying'/ 'they don't buy'
INCE/ F₁	bharaagure bha-raa-gur-e	'they are about to buy'	bhataagure bha-taa-gur-e	'they are not about to buy'
F₂	bhaakagure bha-aka-gur-e	'they will buy (today or tomorrow)'	bhataakagure bha-ta-aka-gur-e	'they will not buy (today or tomorrow)'
F₃	bharigura bha-ri-gur-a	'they will buy (after tomorrow)'	bhatarigura bha-ta-ri-gur-a	'they will not buy (after tomorrow)'

There is another common negative form, which expresses the idea of 'not yet.' For example:

<div>

bhataragura   'they have not yet bought'
bha-ta-ra-gur-a

</div>

4.3 Copular verbs

The most basic copular verb in the present tense is a homorganic nasal clitic. In the orthography this clitic is written as either **n-**, **m-**, **ni-** or **ng'-**, depending on its environment, including a hyphen to separate it from the following word. Some examples of this copula can be seen here:

     (1) **Unu m-murimi.**   'This is a farmer.'
     (2) **Kinu n-kigeso.**   'This is a knife.'
     (3) **Inu ni-nkoko.**   'This is a chicken.'
     (4) **Enu ng'-iika.**   'This is (at) home.'

   There are additional copular forms, such as the emphatic pronouns (present tense) (§2), and past and future copulas, which are found in the chart below. Most of the past copulas (and PROG and PERS) are formed with the stem **ri**, while all future copulas (as well as ANT, NAR and HYP) are formed with the stem **bha**.[30]

Table 15: Kabwa non-present copulas

	Distant Past[31] SBJ-**a**-ri-**nga**	Near Past[32] SBJ-**a**-ri	Anterior[33] SBJ-bh-**iri**	F$_1$[34] SBJ-**raa**-bh-**e**(-**nga**)[35]	F$_2$ SBJ-**aka**-bh-**e**	F$_3$ SBJ-**ri**-bha
1SG	naaringa[36]	naari	mbeeri	ndaabhe	naakabhe	ndibha
2SG	waaringa	waari	obheeri	oraabhe	waakabhe	oribha
3SG	yaaringa	yaari	abheeri	araabhe	yaakabhe	aribha
1PL	twaringa	twari	tubheeri	turaabhe	twakabhe	turibha
2PL	mwaringa	mwari	mubheeri	muraabhe	mwakabhe	muribha
3PL	bhaaringa	bhaari	bhabheeri	bharaabhe	bhaakabhe	bharibha

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[30] There are also some infrequently used past copulas formed with the stem **bha**, such as **bhaabha** 'walikuwa'.

[31] The Distant Past copula covers the time period of the distant past up to and including the previous day.

[32] The Near Past copula cover the time period which begins with the beginning of the current day, like a P$_1$.

[33] The affirmative Anterior covers the time period of only the most recent past. There is also an infrequently found form that seems to be Anterior in meaning, although with the morphemes of P$_2$: SBJ-**a-bh-iri** (**naabheeri, waabheeri,** etc.).

[34] The time periods covered by the future copulas are much clearer than the past: F$_1$ covers the immediate future, F$_2$ the next day, F$_3$ the day after tomorrow.

[35] Many copular forms can take a **–nga** (or **–ngi**) suffix, which seems to add a sort of imperfective aspect, as mentioned above for the Habitual in §4.1 (see also the negative present and negative F1, below). For those forms which can take the **–nga** morpheme, the form with the suffix is always more frequently used than the form without. This is different from how the **–nga** suffix functions to differentiate the Distant Past and Near Past copulas.

[36] The Distant Past 1SG copula is one of the forms which prompted Walker (2013) to analyse the past tense prefix as long **aa-**. Although generally the prefix is treated short orthographically, in this form it surfaces as long and, since it is not in a recognised compensatorily lengthened environment, it is written long.

It is worth noting that the past copula forms, both affirmative and negative, do not seem to fit on the same time scale as regular verbs; thus the reason for the different tense names such as Distant Past (DPST) and Near Past. Also, even though these two past tense forms (both affirmative and negative) are differentiated only by the –**nga** suffix, which usually has only an aspectual function, the two forms clearly refer to different time periods.

There are some other –**nga** forms not included in the table above, including an affirmative present locative form SBJ-ri-ng-i (**ndingi, oringi,** etc.), which takes a locative argument after it as a separate word or phrase. There is also a separate locative form which takes a locative agreement marker on the verb (**ndiho**, etc.).

Negative copular forms are below, formed with the same **ta**- prefix as other negative verbs.

Table 16: Kabwa negative copulas

	Distant Past SBJ-**ta-a**-ri-**nga**	Near Past SBJ-**ta-a**-ri	Present SBJ-**ta**-ri(-**ngi**)[37]	F₁ SBJ-**taa**-bh-**e**(-**nga**)	F₂ SBJ-**ta-aka**-bh-**e**	F₃ SBJ-**ta-ri**-bha
1SG	ntaaringa	ntaari	ntari(ngi)	ntaabhe	ntaakabhe	ntaribha
2SG	otaaringa	otaari	otari(ngi)	otaabhe	otaakabhe	otaribha
3SG	ataaringa	ataari	atari(ngi)	ataabhe	ataakabhe	ataribha
1PL	tutaaringa	tutaari	tutari(ngi)	tutaabhe	tutaakabhe	tutaribha
2PL	mutaaringa	mutaari	mutari(ngi)	mutaabhe	mutaakabhe	mutaribha
3PL	bhataaringa	bhataari	bhatari(ngi)	bhataabhe	bhataakabhe	bhataribha

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[37] The SBJ-**ta**-ri-**ngi** forms are the negative counterpart of **ndingi**, etc., and they also take a locative argument afterwards as a separate word or phrase.

4.4 Compound verbs

A full paradigm of compound verb forms would exceed the scope of this grammar basics sheet. In the following table, only combinations with Anterior and Progressive aspects are displayed, both of which can be combined with all past and future copulas. All examples below have the same 1SG subject and the same lexical stem **gura** 'buy'.

Table 17: Selected Kabwa compound verb forms

	Anterior	Progressive
Distant Past	naaringa nguriri	naaringa ndagura
Near Past	naari nguriri	naari ndagura
Immediate Future	ndaabhe nguriri	ndaabhe ndagura
Middle Future	naakabhe nguriri	naakabhe ndagura
Remote Future	ndibha nguriri	ndibha ndagura

5. Verbal extensions

The derivational extensions are below, showing an example of both a mid-vowel root and a high-vowel root for each extension.

Table 18: Kabwa verbal extensions

	Mid-vowel root		High-vowel root	
Basic Form	okutega	'to trap'	okuruta	'to pull'
Causative -y	okutegya	'to cause to trap'	okurutya	'to cause to pull'
Passive -w	okutegwa	'to be trapped'	okurutwa	'to be pulled'
Applicative -er, -ir	okutegera	'to trap for'	okurutira	'to pull for'
Stative -ek, -ik	okutegeka	'to be trapped'	okurutika	'to be pulled'
Reciprocal -an	okutegana	'to trap each other'	okurutana	'to pull one another'

Less productive extensions are the inversive **-ur** and inversive stative **-uk**. Some examples are:

okutegura	'to release (from a trap)'
okuteguka	'to be released (from a trap)'
okuribhura	'to unclog'
okuribhuka	'to be unclogged'

6. Relative clauses

Relative clauses are formed with a tonal variant of the demonstrative, which functions as a relative pronoun. For instance:

omwana unu	'this child' (demonstrative)
but **omwana unú**...	'the child who...' (relativiser)

The diacritic mark representing a high tone is written in the orthography to easily disambiguate the relativiser from the proximal demonstrative pronoun.

Relativisers based on Proximal (PROX) demonstratives are by far the most common, but Referential (REF) and Distal (DIST) demonstratives can also be used.

Relative clauses employ a wide variety of TAM forms, including the Anterior, various past tenses, various future tenses, and compound forms. A variety of examples are given below, all taken from natural texts.

a.	**bhanú bhaaja**	'who (2.PROX) came (P3)'
b.	**unú araamukerye amariina**	'who (1.PROX) will tell him (INCE) the names'
c.	**unú yaaringa amanyiri**	'who (1.PROX) had found out (DPST.ANT)'
d.	**unú yaajanga wonse**	'who (1.PROX) was coming (DPST.PROG) also'
e.	**hanú bhaahika, bhakamubheera**	'when (16.PROX) they arrived (P3), they helped him (NAR)'
f.	**iyo wairora**	'which (9.REF) you saw (P3)'
g.	**urya Waryubha yaamuhyukya okurwa mubhaku**	'who (1.DIST) God raised (P3) from the dead'

Examples (a), (f) and (g) use the Remote Past (P3), while example (b) employs the Immediate Future tense/Inceptive aspect. Examples (c) and (d) use compound verbs. Example (e) shows that a relative form based on the class 16 spatio-temporal adverb **hanú** 'here, now' is used to form a temporal relative clause.

A conditional clause is formed through the use of **hanú** with a verb form in the INCE/F1. This is exemplified in the following Kabwa sentence:

Hanú	tureemuke	bhoonwego[38],	twakatigite	okuhika.
16.PROX.REL	1PL.INCE.depart	now.like.this	1PL.F2.be.late	to.arrive

'If we depart right now, we will arrive late.'

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[38] The adverb **bhoonwego** is a contracted form of the words **bhoono ego**, and it is written conjunctively.

Abbreviations

1	First person; Class 1
2	Second person; Class 2
3	Third person; Class 3
4, 5, etc.	Class 4, 5, etc.
ANT	Anterior
COND	Conditional
DIST	Distal (Demonstrative)
DPST	Distant Past
F_1	Immediate Future
F_2	Middle Future
F_3	Remote Future
FV	Final Vowel
HAB	Habitual
HYP	Hypothetical
IMP	Imperative
INCE	Inceptive
INF	Infinitive
NAR	Narrative
NC	Noun Class
OBJ	Object
P_1	Today's Past
P_2	Yesterday's Past
P_3	Remote Past
PERS	Persistive
PRS	General Present
PL	Plural
POT	Potential
PROG	Progressive
PROX	Proximal (Demonstrative)
PRS	Present Tense
R	Verb Root
REF	Referential (Demonstrative)
SBJ	Subject
SBJV	Subjunctive
SG	Singular

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