

# Introduction to the Intermediate Level Study Guides

Elementary Swahili courses covered the major grammatical forms and introduced sufficient vocabulary to understand and create many basic Swahili conversations and texts. In preparation for moving toward more advanced work in Swahili, the study guides for intermediate-level Swahili aim to help students begin to engage with authentic textual, audio, and video presentations and to continue to build oral proficiency skills.

While students will be challenged to understand, discuss, and respond to these more complex materials, the course also includes significant review of grammatical structures and specialized vocabulary as they appear in the contexts provided by the course materials. The central textbook is *Masomo ya Kisasa*. This textbook presents authentic Swahili texts along with grammatical notes, discussion questions, speaking activities, and related grammatical exercises so as to introduce intermediate Swahili students to the colloquial structures and grammatical nuances of authentic texts. Essentially, this book begins where *Hinnebusch* ends. Thus, vocabulary and structures that are not explicitly addressed in this text have already been addressed in *Hinnebusch*.

In order to expose students to contemporary issues and different styles of presentation, some study guides also include working with radio, video, and textual samples from national and international media news sources such as BBC Swahili, Tanzania's *Mwananchi*, and others. In order to stay up to date with the most current events and issues, videos, articles, and audio samples will be selected by students in consultation with the Swahili language mentor or conversation partner. This will also give students the opportunity to read, write, and present on topics related to their specific interests and proficiencies. By the end of the intermediate level, students should be able to readily engage authentic Swahili materials in all language skill areas (reading, writing, and listening).

## Required Materials and Recommended Resources for Intermediate Swahili

- *Masomo Ya Kisasa: Contemporary Readings in Swahili*.

- [BBC Swahili](#)
- [Mwananchi](#)
- [Kamusi Project](#) (English-Swahili Dictionary)
- [University of Kansas: Swahili Grammar Guide](#)

## Study Guide 41 Assigned Reading

- Masomo Ya Kisasa: "Introduction" (p. ix), "Nchi Yetu" (pp. 1-12)

## Exercises to Complete

1. Masomo Ya Kisasa: "Nchi Yetu," Maswali 1-9 (p. 10)
2. Read and study the grammar review notes at the end of this study guide (see below).
3. Masomo Ya Kisasa: "Nchi Yetu," Activities – Complete Objectives 1 and 2 (p. 11)
4. Masomo Ya Kisasa: "Nchi Yetu," Activities – Complete Objective 6 (p. 12)
5. Read and study the grammar review notes.

## Grammar Review

1. Refer to the Grammar Notes that follow the reading for this section.
2. The subjunctive has many uses in Swahili. Aside from being used after words that indicate a subjunctive statement – e.g., 'ni lazima,' 'ni afadhali,' 'ni vizuri,' 'ni vema' – the subjunctive verb forms can also be used in a volitional sense (as in, 'Let's do such and such') or as a way of indicating 'should.' The example we see in "Nchi Yetu" is "tuichungue," which can be rendered as 'we should investigate' or 'let's investigate.' Both of these renderings convey similar meanings, however, it is important to be aware of the subtle differences in the use of the subjunctive since we will continue to see these uses appear throughout the readings.
3. The present relative form with 'li-' is a form that is often confused with the past tense form that also uses 'li-' as a tense marker. The example here is "ilivyo" ('the way it is'), which is the present relative form of 'to be.' Notice that there are three parts of this construction: subject prefix ('i-') / tense marker ('-li-') / relative marker ('-vyo').
4. The general relative is a tenseless verb form used to designate a relative construction without a specific temporality, thus designating a "general" action. The example of this in the text is "yafuatayo," which can be rendered

as '(those) that follow.' There are four components of this construction: subject prefix ('ya-') / verb stem ('-fuat-') / a ('-a-') / relative marker ('-yo').

5. There are many different types of complex forms in Swahili and various kinds of these appear throughout these texts. In this selection, two examples of complex verb forms appear: "ilikuwa ni" / "iliyokuwa inaitwa." The first of these examples, "ilikuwa ni," can be loosely translated as "it was the case that." According to Biersteker, this particular construction is used to refer to the condition of a situation over time. The second complex verb form seen here in this text, "iliyokuwa inaitwa," can be translated as "that was called/was being called." With complex verb forms that involve "kuwa," such as this example, it is crucial to understand the functions of the first verb and the second verb as they are joined together to denote a more complex sense of temporality and aspect than that permitted by singular (not complex) verb formations. That is, while the first verb with "kuwa" indicates the temporal reference (here, the tense marker is '-li-' and thus the temporal reference is to the past), the second verb designates the aspectual content (here, marked by '-na-' so it indicates a continuous aspect). Of course, other subordinate or dependent clauses may also be present in complex verb forms. For example, "iliyokuwa inaitwa" contains a relative clause denoted by the use of the relative marker '-yo-' in the first verb. There are many different uses for complex verb forms but this sequence of a temporal reference followed by an aspectual designation is always the primary formula of such constructions.
6. The use of reduplicated adjectives is common throughout Swahili registers, formal or colloquial, and, according to Biersteker, are usually best understood as denoting a similar sense of meaning as that achieved by adding the English suffix '-ish' to the end of word. The example seen in this selection, "jotojoto" (the non-reduplicated word being 'joto,' 'hot; heat') would thus be rendered "warmish" in English. The reduplication of nouns has a similar effect, though, since the root word is a nominal form, the noun will often take on an adjectival sense, resulting in something like an adjectival noun. Biersteker provides the example of "majimaji" (from the noun 'maji,' 'water') which, as a reduplicated form, results in the sense of "wet" or "watery" in English. Verbs too are also capable of fluxes in meaning or differentiations of sense through reduplication. Oftentimes, with verbs, reduplication results in a sense of repetitive action or an intensification of meaning in the original verb form. For example, 'kufanya,' 'to do/make,' could

be reduplicated and rendered 'kufanyafanya,' and translated into English as meaning either 'to do (something) again and again' or 'to do something with great strain or intensity.' While this duplicity in meaning – either an emphasis of repetition or intensification of an action – is commonly the case with reduplicated verb forms, the appropriate sense is usually evident based on the context in which it appears. However, in some cases of reduplication involving verbs of motion, neither a sense of intensification nor a sense of repetition is an appropriate understanding of its meaning. Biersteker provides the example of "kuzunguka," 'to surround,' which takes on the meaning of 'to wander or encircle' when reduplicated as "kuzungukazunguka." Furthermore, adverbial applications of reduplicated forms are commonly used. Biersteker provides the example of "kugawanya sehemu sehemu," 'to divide into sections.' The reduplication of the noun 'sehemu,' 'section; part; place,' indicates the sense of a fragmentary division when used alongside the verb "kugawanya," 'to split up; divide.' Nevertheless, having delineated some examples of reduplication here, it is crucial to bear in mind the equivocal nature of reduplicated forms – one must always look at these formulations case by case and context by context.

## Preparation for Conversation Session

- Be prepared to discuss your reactions, thoughts, questions, and concerns regarding the selection(s) from the text assigned this week. Is there anything you found particularly interesting? Were there moments or passages you did not quite understand? What have you learned from this reading? What would you like to explore further?
- Be prepared to give a verbal version of the description you prepared for Objective 1. Be prepared to give a spoken description without reading it from your text. It does not need to be word by word the same as what you wrote, just communicate your description to your conversation partner and classmates.
- Be prepared to do Object 2 in the conversation session. Before the session choose your preferred part of Tanzania to visit based on climate and be prepared to discuss your choice and the choices of your classmates and conversation partner.

# Assignments Due at Tutorial

1. Write out your responses to “Maswali” in Masomo Ya Kisasa (p. 10). Discuss with your mentor aspects of the reading you did not understand or about which you have further questions.
2. Write a descriptive paragraph as assigned in Objective 1. You should also be prepared to give your description verbally in conversation session without reading it from your text.
3. Write out the assignment about the Subjunctive in Objective 6.