Kilba morphological processes: A descriptive analysis

Abstract. This paper examines the morphological processes that occur in Kilba. Three major processes have been identified: affixation, reduplication and modification. Affixation includes prefixation and suffixation, while reduplication and modification can be complete or partial. We account for this within the model of the approach of Matthews (1993) and Abubakar (2000).

1. Introduction

Greenberg (1963) classifies Kilba in the Bura –Margi group of the Chadic family of the Afro-Asiatic pylum. It is spoken in the Hong local government area of Adamawa state in Northern Nigeria. Hong and Gaya. Agriculture, blacksmithing, weaving, are included in the economics activities of the people Muazu (1995). Hananiya (1993) and Muazu (1995) state that there are two dialects in the language.

2. Morphological processes in Kilba

Matthews (1993) discusses morphological processes, identifying there basic types viz: affixation, reduplication, and modification. Affixation can include prefixation, infixation, or suffixation, while reduplication and modification are divided into complete and partial.

A Bubakar (2000) agrees with Mathews (1993) about affixation and reduplication, but differs slightly on modification. According to Abubakar (2000), modification is the major morphological processes, but he does not subcategorize modification. Processes identified
include suppletion, vowel change, stress change, tone modification, subtraction, clipping, hypocorism, conversion, blend, and acronyms.

2.1.1. Prefixation in Kilba

In this study, we discovered four prefixes, namely: \( ndùr\), \( njìr\), \( mbòr\), and \( vír\). The two prefixes, \( ndèr\) ‘one who’ and \( njìr\) ‘people of”, both have the idea of ‘doer of” when prefixed to a verb. \( ndùr\) is neutral gender marking ‘singular’, while \( njìr\) is a neutral gender marking ‘plural’. The two morphs \( ndùr\) and \( njìr\) also give the idea of ‘one who comes from or belong to’ and ‘people of” a town when they are prefixed to a name of a town. \( ndùr\) indicates ‘one who comes from or belongs to’ while \( njìr\) indicates either ‘people of’ or ‘people’. On the other hand, the last two prefixes, \( mbòr\) and \( vír\) give an idea of ‘a place of” and are mostly prefixed to a verb. The data cited in example (1 & 2) below provide examples of these phenomena.

1. The Kilba prefixes \( ndùr\) and \( njìr\)

- \( ndùr\) + mafaku → \( ndùr\)mafaku
  to take message one who take message (messenger)

- \( ndùr\) + hôrà → \( ndùrhôrà\)
  to build one who builds (builder)

- \( njìr\) + miya → \( njìrmìya\)
  to sing people who sings (singers)

- \( njìr\) + tlôrà → \( njìr\)tlôrà
  to work people who work (workers)

- \( ndùr\) + Borno → \( ndùr\)Borno
  name of a town one who comes from or belong to Borno

- \( ndùr\) + Hong → \( ndùr\)Hong
  name of a town one who comes from or belong to Hong

- \( njìr\) + Yola → \( njìr\)Yola
  name of a town people who comes from Kebbi or Kebbi indigenes
2.2. The Kilba prefix *mbôr*- and *vìr*-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mbôr</td>
<td>+ dlama</td>
<td>mbôrdlàmà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to pray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbôr</td>
<td>+ Wàdà</td>
<td>mbòrwàɗà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to bath</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vìr</td>
<td>+ tatɔm</td>
<td>vir tɔtùm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to cook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vìr</td>
<td>+ kɔrɔtsɔn</td>
<td>vikɔrɔtsɔn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vìr</td>
<td>+ gɔdiHyell</td>
<td>virgɔdiHyell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to pray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on examples (1) & (2) we observe that in Kilba, it is possible to derive a noun from a verb through prefixation process using the prefixes *ndùr*-, *njìr*-, *mbôr*-, and *vìr*- respectively.

Note that all the four prefixes have a low tone. Similarly, they keep their tone constant throughout all the inflectional and derivational processes.

2.2 Suffixation in Kilba

This process involves the occurrences of bound morpheme at the end of a root/stem. We discovered that in Kilba there are five types of suffixes, namely (1) abstraction suffix- kur (2) possessive suffixes (3) demonstrative suffixes (4) emphatic suffix and (5) the *ari*- suffix.

2.2.1. Abstract suffix *kùr*-

The *kùr*- suffix forms abstract noun. It functions in much the same way as English (-ness), (-hood), (-ship). In addition, Hoffman, (1963:47) states that the -kùr suffix occurs in all languages of the Bura –Margi group. See also Newman (1990), Muazu (1995), and Pulleyblank (1983).

3. A. Abstract nouns derived from adjectives
ɗimì + kùr → ɗimikùr
bad   badness

dzáù + kùr → dzáùkùr
difficult  difficulty

tàshè + kùr → tàshèkùr
short  shortness

B. Abstract nouns derived from verbs

zìr + kùr → zìrkùr
child  childhood/childishness

sàl + kùr → sàlkùr
man/masculine  manhood/masculinity

màvà + kùr → màvàkùr
servant  slavery/servitude

C. Abstract nouns derived from verbs

tlà + kùr → tlàkùr
cut  cutting/its being cut

ngyà + kùr → ngyàkùr
seat  seating/its being seated

h∂là + kùr → h∂làkùr
steal  stealing/its being stolen

D: Abstract nouns derived from a word group: Verb + Noun object

Vàlà + dzà + kɔ’yà + kùr → valadzàkɔ’yàkùr
helping body  each-other  mutual help/helping ourself

pa + kɔ,yà + ndù + kur → paka,yàndùkùr
fight each other  fighting each other/incidence of fighting each other

vàlà + ndù + kùr → vàländùkùr
help “person”  generous/generosity

Based on the above analysis of the data in example (3) A.B.C and D, reveals that the
suffix kùr- Can be used to derived abstract nouns from the followings: adjective, nouns, verbs,
and a word group of verb + noun object. Similarly, it is discovered that the suffix kùr- has a low tone, at the same time the tone of the Kùr- suffixes remains constant through out all the conjunctional and derivational processes.

2.2.2 Possessive suffixes

In Kilba, we have the following possessive suffixes as follows: +dà, +ngà, + nyì, + kô’yà, +kôhyi, and kôndà. These possessive suffixes can never occur alone and are thus written as part of the word, which the y modified. Out of the six possessive suffixes, three are singular (+dà, +ngà, +nyì) while the other three are plural (+kô’yà, kôhyi and kôndà). The above phenomena are illustrated in example (4) below

4. A. -dà ‘my’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kilba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wife</td>
<td>málà + dà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>málà dà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>likàtkatà + dà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>làkàtkatà dà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. -nga ‘yours’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kilba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ram</td>
<td>gàm + ngà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gàmngà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knife</td>
<td>ngôhyà + ngà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ngôhyângà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. -nyì ‘his/her’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kilba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kolanut</td>
<td>gwár + nyì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gwárnyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>kùm + nyì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kùmnyì</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. -kô’yà ‘ours’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kilba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>Vî + kô’yà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vi kô’yà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shàlà + kô’yà → shàlákô’yà
calabash calabash of ours our calabash

E. -kô’ ‘yours’ (Pl)

&amà + kô’hyi → &amà kô’hyi
mother mother of yours your mother
mihipii + kô’hyi → mihipí kô’hyi
guest guest of yours your guest

F. -kÔnda ‘theirs’

&ájì + KÔndà → &ájìKÔndà
grandparent grandparent of theirs their grandparent
kùdákù + KÔndà → kùdákùKÔndà
Potatoes Potatoes of theirs their potatoes

In example (4) above, we observed that all the six suffixes have a low tone which remains constant throughout the suffixation processes.

2.2.3 Demonstrative suffixes

In Kilba, there are two types of demonstratives suffixes: namely: - na ‘this’ and -nda that.

Consider the following example (5) below:

5. ndù + nà → ndùnà
   person person this this person
   sàl + nà → sàlnà
   man man this this man
   ndù̀ + ndà → ndùndà
   person person that that person
   sàl + ndà → sàlndà
   man man that that man

These data show that Kilba demonstrative suffixes na- and nda- both have a low tone.
2.2.4 Emphatic suffixes

Two emphatic suffixes in Kilba, –nà and –ndà are suffixed to possessive pronouns to add emphasis or stress. The phenomena are illustrated in example (6):

6. málàďà + nà → málàďànà
   my wife   this is my wife

   málàďà + ndà → málàďândà
   my wife   that is my wife

   sângà + nà → sângànà
   your husband this is your husband

   sângà + ndà → sângândà
   your husband that is your husband

   âdànyì + nà → âdànyinà
   his/her father this is his/her father

   âdànyì + ndà → âdànyîndà
   is/ her father that was his/her father

   âmàkó’yà + nà → âmàkó’yànà
   our mother this is our mother

   âmàkó’yà + ndà → âmàkó’yândà
   our mother that is our mother

   dàgôlåkôhyì + nà → dàgôlåkôhyinà
   your (pl) pig this is your (pl) pi

   dàgôlåkôhyì + ndà → dàgôlåkôhyîndà
   your (pl) pig that is your (pl) pig

   màvàkôndà + nà → màvàkôndànà
   their servant this is their servant

   màvàkôndà + ndà → màvàkôndândà
   their servant that is their servant

The tone of both suffixes is low and remains constant throughout the suffixation process.
2.2.5 The -ári suffix

In Kilba, we observed that the suffix –ári is used to derive a verb from a noun through the process of suffixation to the base forms. The tone of the suffix is high-low tone (HL) while the base form is low, low, or low low-low tone, the high tone of the suffix is suppressed and the low tone of the preceding low tone, which came from the base root, is shifted to the suffix. The above phenomena are illustrated in example (7):

7.  kàkàmù +árà → kàkàmấri  
foul smell  to sniff a foul smell

    shì’ùnì + árì → shì’ùnấri  
bad smell  to smell it

    tàshè + árì → tàshấri  
short   to shorten

In example (7) we observed that the final vowel of the root/stem i.e. /u/ /i/ and /e/ are deleted when -ári is suffixed to it. Although it is important to note that there are other types of Kilba inflectional suffixes, namely -áni, -yà, -nà, -nyà, -ngóri,-rì, -biyà and tì. It is observed that cases of truncation occur. When the inflectional suffixes are added to the non-final form of a simple verb stem, if the base form ends in –a, the two /-a/ are contracted into one, while if it ends in other vowels /o/, /e/, /u/, or /i/, they are usually deleted before taking on the suffixes.

This phenomenon occurs in the following Kilba inflectional suffixes namely:-ári,-áni and biyà.

In the same vein, it has been observed that the following inflectional suffixes mention above, namely: -yà, -nà, -nyà, -ngóri, and tì when added to other simple verb stems that end in –a it drops/deletes the –a and suppressed the tone or leave it floating, before taking the suffix. In all five inflected forms, their tones remain constant. Of the nine suffixes listed above, it has been observed that only -rì does not delete the vowel of the base form, even if it ends in –a. It retains –a, plus the tone, i.e., the tone of the base form remains constant the inflected form.
3. Reduplication in Kilba

In Kilba, another shade of meaning is produced through reduplicating the whole or part of the base form. Two types of reduplication occur in Kilba, complete and partial.

3.1 Complete reduplication

In Kilba, we observe situations where the repeated or reduplicated segment of a base form is a copy of the base. Consider the example (8) below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Form</th>
<th>Reduplicated Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɓìti</td>
<td>ɓìti- ɓìti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>watery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pèrtù</td>
<td>pèrtù-pèrtù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>whitish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàt càl</td>
<td>kàt càl- kàt càl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
<td>chiefs of various groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓwà</td>
<td>ɓwà- ɓwà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to cook</td>
<td>cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɗùwà</td>
<td>ɗùwà – ɗùwà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to hide</td>
<td>hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dɔgà</td>
<td>dɔgà-dɔgà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thrash/wash</td>
<td>thrashed/washed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in example (8) above show that some nouns and adjectives in Kilba form their plural through the process of complete reduplication, while verbs are reduplicated to show intensity. Similarly, it is also discovered that in complete reduplication, the tonal character of the verb does not seem to be affected; the reduplicated syllable(s) has(have) the same tone(s) as the initial syllable or the whole stem of the verb.

3.2 Partial reduplication

In Kilba, there are situations whereby only part of the base form in repeated or reduplicated.

The data in example (9) illustrated these phenomena.
9. hàlá → hàlhàlá
to age already age
dỳzù → dzdỳzù
red reddish
wùshù → wùwùshù
soft a bit soft
ndàsà → ndàsndàsà
to swallow swallow up
ɓlù → ɓlɓlù
to break broken

In the above example (9), we observe that in partial reduplication, the reduplicated copies the CV of the stem and the tones, but not --C. A Kilba word /root of the shape CVCCV for instance, is reduplicated as CV-CVCCV, not CVC-CVCCV.

3. Modification in Kilba

Modification is the third Morphological processes that operates in the formation of word in Kilba. We identified five sub-processes in the language, namely vowel change, tone modification, clipping, zero modification, and :- :-suppletion (c.f.Mua’zu 1995).

3.1 Vowel change

In Kilba, we discovered that there are some words that exhibit a change in the vowel of the base form in order to derive another word, as in examples (10) below.

10. cii → caa
    hand hands of
    màvà → màvìì
    servant servants
    hyà → hyì
    leg of legs
Considering these examples, we see that in Kilba of some plurals are formed through vowel change, although the tone in the two forms remain constant.

3.2 Tone modification

According to Abubakar (2000), tone has two functions, namely, lexical and morphological. In this paper, we are concerned with the morphological function only. Examples of these phenomena are provided in example (11) below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASE</th>
<th>DERIVED</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sá</td>
<td>saa</td>
<td>drink/drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Í</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>like/love/liking/loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlá</td>
<td>tłaa</td>
<td>cut/cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngyá</td>
<td>ngyaa</td>
<td>seat/seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chá</td>
<td>chaa</td>
<td>show/showing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dá</td>
<td>dää</td>
<td>eat/eating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We observe that in Kilba the verbal nouns of the so-called monosyllabic verbs are derived through tone modification and vowel lengthening. The base form has a high tone, while a verbal noun has a falling tone. Kilba verbal nouns of the so-called monosyllabic verbs operate similar to that of Hausa, as discussed in Abubakar (2000:8). In the same vain, it is important to note that these Kilba verbal nouns are determined by the syntactic structure of the expressions that contain them.

3.3 Clipping

Abubakar (2000) states that clipping in Kilba, which occurs in personal names, may be seen as a form of modification. According to Buer (1991, quoted in Abubakar 2000). There are two
types of clipping, namely back clipping and front clipping. This can be exemplified in (12) below.

12. Full name   Clipped form
    Ana’aticha → Na’ati
    Usakutiya Hyell → Usaku
    Nacha Hyell a-na’a → Nacha
    Kwahir → Hir
    Hyella murti → Murti

3.4 Zero modification

According to Abubakar (2000), zero modification is a process which does not delete, subtract from, or reduplicate a word, but rather changes the morphological class of a word to another without changing its form. Kilba words that undergo the process of zero modification (or conversion) are listed in (13):

13. Base                  Modified Class
    bazhi                bazhi
    friend   →          male/female friend
    Gwadi                Gwadi
    proper name →      proper name, used for both male/female
    Chabiya              Chabiya
    proper name →      proper name, for male/female
    Bili                 Bili
    proper name for twins → proper name, for male/female twins

From these examples, we observe that a single name can be used for both male and female without changing in form.
4. Suppletion

In kilba, some words in a paradigm show no apparent correlation between the forms of related words, i.e., they exhibit substitution, as in English *is*, *am*, and *was*. Thus the morphological or grammatical link between the two forms is not apparent. The data in example (14) illustrated this:

14.  zìr → ngulisha’a
    child → children
    vəgəm → mbùgùrá
    cock → hen
    gàm → kətən
    ram → ewe
    kwà → bùrà
    goat → he goat
    zìr → ngùli
    child → sons

5. Conclusion

Affixation in Kilba has been discovered to be of two types namely: prefixation and suffixation. Four prefixes were identified in this study, namely: *ndér-, njir-, mbor-, and vi-*. Similarly five types of suffixes were also identified, namely: Abstract suffix –*kur*, possessive suffixes –*da-, nga, -nyi, -kə’yə, -kəhyi, -kənda*, demonstrative suffix –*na* and –*nda* emphatic suffixes – *na* and –*nda*, and *ari* suffix. Other suffixes in the language are –*ànì, -biyà, -yà, -nà, -nyà, -ngəri, -tì* and *rì*. In the same vein, reduplication in kilba has been observed to be of two types, complete and partial, while word modification in Kilba has been discovered to include vowel change, tone modification, clipping, and zero modification (conversion), along with suppletion.
References


