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## **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 phylum. 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 economic 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 their basic types viz: affixation, reduplication, and modification. Affixation can include prefixation, infixation, or suffixation, while reduplication and modification are divided into complete and partial.

Abubakar (2000) agrees with Matthews (1993) about affixation and reduplication, but differs slightly on modification. According to Abubakar (2000), modification is the major morphological process, 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 *vìr-*. The two prefixes, *ndòr-* ‘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 *vìr-* 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-**

<i>ndùr</i> + mafaku to take message	→	<i>ndùrmafaku</i> one who take message (messenger)
<i>ndùr</i> + hòrà to build	→	<i>ndùrhòrà</i> one who builds (builder)
<i>njìr</i> + miya to sing	→	<i>njìrmìyà</i> people who sings (singers)
<i>njìr</i> + tlòrà to work	→	<i>njìrtlòrà</i> people who work (workers)
<i>ndùr</i> + Borno name of a town	→	<i>ndùrBorno</i> one who comes from or belong to Borno
<i>ndùr</i> + Hong name of a town	→	<i>ndùrHong</i> one who comes from or belong to Hong
<i>njìr</i> + Yola name of a town	→	<i>njìrYola</i> people who comes from Kebbi or Kebbi indigenes

## 2.2. The Kilba prefix *mbòr-* and *vìr-*

mbòr + dlama to pray	→	mbòrdlámà place for Muslim prayer (mosque)
mbòr + Wàḏà to bath	→	mbòrwàḏà bathing place (bathroom)
Vir + tatôm to cook	→	vìr tátùm cooking place (kitchen)
vìr + kòràtsôn to read	→	vikòràtsôn a room used for reading (library)
Vir + gòdihyell to pray	→	vìrgòdihyèll a room used for praying to god (church)

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-*, *mbòr-*, and *vìr-* respectively. Note that all the four prefixes have a low tone. Similarly, they keep their tone constant through out 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 *kur-* 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

đimì + kùr bad	→	đimikùr badness
dzáù + kùr difficult	→	dzáùkùr difficulty
tàshè + kùr short	→	tàshèkùr shortness

B. Abstract nouns derived from verbs

zìr + kùr child	→	zìrkùr childhood/ childishness
sàl + kùr man/masculine	→	sàlkùr manhood/masculinity
màvà + kùr servant	→	màvákùr slavery/servitude

C. Abstract nouns derived from verbs

tlà + kùr cut	→	tlàkùr cutting"/its being cut
ngyà + kùr seat	→	ngyàkùr seating/its being seated
hɔlà + kùr steal	→	hɔlàkùr stealing/ its being stolen

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

Vàlà + dzà + kɔ'yà + kùr helping body each-other	→	valadzàkɔ'yàkùr mutual help/helping ourself
pa + kə,yà + ndù + kur fight each other	→	pakə,yàndùkùr fighting each other/incidence of fighting each other
vàlà + ndù + kùr help "person"	→	vàlàndùkùr 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 conjugational and derivational processes.

### 2.2.2 Possessive suffixes

In Kilba, we have the following possessive suffixes as follows: +*ɗà*, +*ngà*, +*nyì*, +*kɔ̀'jà*, +*kɔ̀hyì*, and *kɔ̀ndà*. 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 (+*ɗà*, +*ngà*, +*nyì*) while the other three are plural (+*kɔ̀'jà*, *kɔ̀hyì* and *kɔ̀ndà*). The above phenomena are illustrated in example (4) below

#### 4. A. -*ɗà* 'my'

<i>màlà</i> + <i>ɗà</i> wife	→	<i>màlà ɗà</i> wife of mine	my wife
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<i>likàtkàtá</i> + <i>ɗà</i> book	→	<i>lákàtkàtá ɗà</i> book of mine	my book
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#### B. -*ngà* 'yours'

<i>gàm</i> + <i>ngà</i> ram	→	<i>gàmngà</i> it is ram of yours	your ram
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<i>ngɔ̀hyà</i> + <i>ngà</i> knife	→	<i>ngɔ̀hyàngà</i> knife of yours	your knife
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#### C. -*nyì* 'his/her'

<i>gwár</i> + <i>nyì</i> kolanut	→	<i>Gwárnyì</i> kolanut of her/his	her/his kolanut
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<i>kùm</i> + <i>nyì</i> meat	→	<i>kùmnyì</i> meat of yours	her/his meat
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#### D. -*kɔ̀'jà* 'ours'

<i>Vi</i> + <i>kɔ̀'jà</i> Room	→	<i>Vi kɔ̀'jà</i> room of ours	our room
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	shàlà + kɔ̄'yà calabash	→	shàlàkɔ̄'yà calabash of ours	our calabash
E.	-kɔ̄ 'yours'(Pl)			
	àmà + kɔ̄'hyì mother	→	àmà kɔ̄'hyì mother of yours	your mother
	mihìpii + kɔ̄'hyì guest	→	mihìpi kɔ̄'hyì guest of yours	your guest
F.	-kɔ̄nda 'theirs'			
	àji + Kɔ̄nda grandparent	→	àjiKɔ̄nda grandparent of theirs	their grandparent
	kùdàkù + Kɔ̄nda Potatoes	→	kùdàkùKɔ̄nda 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 demonstrative 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
	ndòù+ 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.	màláǵà + <i>nà</i> my wife	→	màlàǵà <i>nà</i> this is my wife
	màlàǵà + <i>nda</i> my wife	→	màlàǵà <i>ndà</i> that is my wife
	sàlŋà + <i>nà</i> your husband	→	sàlŋà <i>nà</i> this is your husband
	sàlŋà + <i>ndà</i> your husband	→	sàlŋà <i>ndà</i> that is your husband
	àdànyì + <i>nà</i> his/her father	→	àdànyì <i>nà</i> this is his/her father
	àdànyì + <i>ndà</i> is/her father	→	àdànyì <i>ndà</i> that was his/her father
	àmàkǵ'ya + <i>nà</i> our mother	→	àmàkǵ'ya <i>nà</i> this is our mother
	àmàkǵ'ya + <i>ndà</i> our mother	→	àmàkǵ'ya <i>ndà</i> that is our mother
	dàgǵlákǵhyì + <i>nà</i> your (pl) pig	→	dàgǵlákǵhyì <i>nà</i> this is your (pl) pi
	dàgǵlákǵhyì + <i>ndà</i> your (pl) pig	→	dàgǵlákǵhyì <i>ndà</i> that is your (pl) pig
	màvákǵndà + <i>nà</i> their servant	→	màvákǵndà <i>nà</i> this is their servant
	màvákǵndà + <i>ndà</i> their servant	→	màvákǵndà <i>ndà</i> 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 verb from noun through the process of suffixation it 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   →     kàkàmàri  
           foul smell           to sniff a foul smell
- shì`ùnì + ári   →     shì`ùnàri  
           bad smell           to smell it
- tàshè + ári   →     tàshàri  
           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*, *-ngəri*, *-ri*, *-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 mentioned above, namely: *-yà*, *-nà*, *-nyà*, *-ngəri*, and *tì* when added to other simple verb stem that ends in *-a* it drops/deletes the *-a* and suppresses the tone or leaves 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 *-ri* 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 in 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 copy of the base. Consider the example (8) below:

8.	ɓiti water	→	ɓiti- ɓiti watery
	pèrtù White	→	pèrtù-pèrtù whitish
	kàtɔl chief	→	kàtɔl- kàtɔl chiefs of various groups {From various groups}
	ɓwà to cook	→	ɓwà- ɓwà cooked
	ɗùwá to hide	→	ɗùwá – ɗùwá hidden
	dɔgà thrash/wash	→	dɔgà-dɔgà thrashed/washed

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 is repeated or reduplicated.

The data in example (9) illustrated these phenomena.

9.	hàlà to age	→	hàlhàlà already age
	dôzôu red	→	dôzdôzôu reddish
	wùshù soft	→	wùwùshù a bit soft
	ndàsà to swallow	→	ndàsndàsà swallow up
	ɓɔlà to break	→	ɓɔlɓɔlà 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 hand	→	caa hands of
	màvâ servant	→	màvîi servants
	hyà leg of	→	hyi legs

kwàtòrà      →      kwiitòrà  
female servant      female servants

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:

11.	BASE	→	DERIVED	GLOSS
	Sá	→	saa	drink/drinking
	Í	→	ii	like/love /liking/ loving
	Tlá	→	tlaa	cut/cutting
	ngyá	→	ngyaa	seat/seating
	chá	→	chaa	show/showing
	ḍá	→	ḍaa	eat/eating

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 vein, 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 friend	→	bazhi male/female friend
	Gwadi proper name	→	Gwadi proper name, used for both male/femle
	Chabiya proper name	→	Chabiya proper name, for male/female
	Bili proper name for twins	→	Bili 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
- vðgðm →     mbùgùrà  
       cock         hen
- gàm     →     kðtðn  
       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: *ndðr-*, *njir-*, *mbor-*, and *vi-*. Similarly five types of suffixes were also identified, namely: Abstract suffix *-kur*, possessive suffixes, *-ða*, *-nga*, *-nyi*, *-kð'yð*, *-kðhyi*, *-kðnda*, demonstrative suffix *-na* and *-nda* emphatic suffixes *-na* and *-nda*, and *ari* suffix. Other suffixes in the language are *-áni*, *-biyà*, *-yà*, *-nà*, *-nyà*, *-ngəri*, *-ti* and *ri*. 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.

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