

Additional Swahili Data

(courtesy A. Khamisi)

In the six Swahili exercises a total of six noun genders are presented. Additional data for the Swahili spoken in Tanzania shows the following points of interest:

1. There are two additional genders, a *ji-/ma-* gender, and an *u-/u-* gender.
2. Swahili 2 includes no Gender 1 nouns with vowel-initial roots. When such data are included, it becomes clear that the prefix forming this gender has the form *mw-*, with the *w* being deleted before consonant-initial roots.
3. The *wa-* plural inflection of this same gender has its *a* truncated before vowel-initial roots, possibly by the same rule that operates before possessive stems in Swahili 6.
4. The apostrophe device for blocking glide formation must be added to the *u-* prefix of Gender 8 to distinguish its behavior from the *u-* prefix of Gender 4.

A table of the noun prefixes thus becomes:

Gender	Word-formation (sg.)	Plural Inflection (replacive)	Semantic Correlates
1	mw-	wa-	human
2	m-	mi'-	tree
3	ki-	vi-	thing (diminutive)
4	u-	ñ-	appendages
5	∅-	ma-	liquid
6	ñ-	ñ-	misc., flora & fauna
7	ji-	ma-	round (augmentative)
8	u'-	u'-	abstract

Gender 6 is usually used for loan words, probably because it required no singular-plural distinction. Note that with the change of the Gender 1 (sg.) prefix, there is no longer any syncretism in the singular. Note also that there are now two instances of syncretism in the plural, as would be expected in the marked property.

Here are the additional data:

Gender	Singular noun	Plural noun	Gloss
1	mwana	wana	<i>child</i>
	mwanafunzi	wanafunzi	<i>student</i>
	mwalimu	walimu	<i>teacher</i>
	mlimi	walimi	<i>gossiper, a gossip</i>
3	kilimilimi	vilimilimi	<i>a vicious gossip</i>
4	ulimi	ndimi	<i>tongue</i>
5	ua	maua	<i>flower</i>
7	jiwe	mawe	<i>stone</i>
8	ualimu	ualimu	<i>teaching</i>
	uanafunzi	uanafunzi	<i>studenthood</i>

