Morphology of the Ishiculu language

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Some glossing abbreviations used in this chapter are INT: interior, STA: static, CENTF: centrifugal, IMP: imperative, 7: Noun Class 7.

Ishiculu exhibits highly synthetic verbal morphology. Prefixation and suffixation are responsible for marking the tense, the subject, and when applicable, the object of the verb. Ishiculu is mostly agglutinative in terms of its verb affixation: different grammatical features of the verb are expressed through different affixes, except for the person and the number, which are contained in the same prefix. On the other hand, the nominal morphology of Ishiculu is marginally synthetic, with nouns having only affixes for locative cases. Adjectives, pronouns, and conjunctions are completely analytic in Ishiculu.

There are both inflectional and derivational affixes in Ishiculu, while most inflectional affixes are attached to verbs. Moreover, Ishiculu does not have the process of lexical composition, and all of its affixes are bound morphemes.

A general structure of an Ishiculu verb consists of subject agreement, object agreement, stem, derivational suffixes, and tense, in this order. Ishiculu verbs agree with the subject and the direct and indirect objects, if any. The agreement with the subject and the direct object is presented through prefixation to verbs, while the agreement with the indirect object is expressed through suffixation. The same set of affixes is used for all three agreements.

person	singular	plural
1st	-ni-/-niw-	-tse-/-tsew-
2nd	-mbo-/-mboy-	-u-/-uy-
3rd	-ki-/-kiw-	-so-/-soy-

The form in each entry is used before a consonant or word-finally, and the second is used if the next syllable starts with a vowel. Following is an example of this morphophonological process.

(1) *Elly pa ki-so   ntało kitabu.*
     Elly not 3SG-like CLF.7 book(7)
     'Elly doesn't read the book.'

(2) *Elly pa   kiw-ioani ntało kitabu.*
     Elly not 3SG-like   CLF.7 book(7)
     'Elly doesn't like the book.'

The suffix *-ła* mark the causative form of a verb. Accordingly, the causee of the causative verb is marked with an indirect object suffix after the causative suffix.

(3) *Fu-Philadelphia ni-hi-ła-ki   Elly ntało kitabu.*
     in-Philadelphia 1SG-hear-CAUS-3SG Elly CLF.7 book(7)
     'I (will) read the book to Elly.'

Ishiculu has two tenses: present and past. The present tense is marked with a *-ø* suffix, and can be used for future events. The past tense is marked with a *-mbi* suffix.

(4) *Tse-kiw-ioani-ø   ntało kitabu.*
     1PL-3SG-like-PRS CLF.7 book(7)
     'We (will) like the book.'

(5) *Tse-kiw-ioani-mbi ntało kitabu.*
     1PL-3SG-like-PST   CLF.7 book(7)
     'We used to like the book.'

The imperative can occur either alone or with an object prefix.

	Alone	With object
Singular	*-a*	*-e*
Plural	*-ani*	*-eni*

(6) *shi-a*
     read_aloud-IMP
     'Read aloud!'

(7) *ki-shi-e   ntało kitabu*
     read_aloud-IMP CLF.7 book(7)
     'Read the book aloud!'

Ishiculu nouns receive prefixes for the location of the locative case, and suffixes for the direction of any movement involved.

	-ø: static	*-tsɔ*: centrifugal	*-ʒu*: centripetal
fu-: interior	'in, at, inside'	'out of'	'into'
tsɣ-: surface	'on the surface of'	'off the surface of'	'onto the surface of'

(8) *Fu-Philadelphia-ø   tse-ke-ła-ki   Elly ntało kitabu.*
     INT-Philadelphia-STA 1SG-have-CAUS-3SG Elly CLF.7 book(7)
     'We will give Elly the book in Philadelphia.'

(9) *Elly fu-Philadelphia-tso.*
     Elly INT-Philadelphia-CENTF
     'Elly is from Philadelphia.'