

# *A Concise Grammar of Ishiculu*

A GRAMMAR CONSTRUCTED  
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# Contents

|     |                                      |    |
|-----|--------------------------------------|----|
| 1   | DEMOGRAPHICS AND ETHNOGRAPHICS       | 3  |
| 2   | PHONOLOGY                            | 6  |
| 2.1 | . . . . .                            | 6  |
| 2.2 | Syllable structure . . . . .         | 7  |
| 2.3 | Tones and stress . . . . .           | 8  |
| 3   | CONSTITUENT ORDER                    | 9  |
| 4   | VERBS                                | 13 |
| 4.1 | Agreements . . . . .                 | 13 |
| 4.2 | Tenses . . . . .                     | 15 |
| 4.3 | Imperative . . . . .                 | 15 |
| 4.4 | Valency-changing processes . . . . . | 16 |
| 5   | ADPOSITIONS                          | 21 |
| 6   | CLASSIFIERS                          | 23 |
| 7   | EMBEDDINGS                           | 25 |
| 7.1 | Coordination . . . . .               | 25 |
| 7.2 | Relative clauses . . . . .           | 25 |
| 8   | INTERROGATIVES                       | 27 |
| 8.1 | Polar questions . . . . .            | 27 |
| 8.2 | Content questions . . . . .          | 29 |

# 1

## Demographics and ethnographics

ISHICULU IS A CREOLE LANGUAGE spoken by the Kuxutshwe, a community in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa of people of mixed Zulu and Chinese ancestry. The term “Kuxutshwe” means “mixed” in Zulu, and is the self-referent of the Kuxutshwe people.

Before the 2020s, there had been American scholars and organizations in eastern South Africa building health infrastructure. This trend motivated other organizations, mostly from the Greater China Region, to add to their presence in eastern South Africa. By the end of the 2020s, because of a strengthened South African government and a pivot of US international policies, most

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Zulu      | 71.8%   |
| English   | 15.2%   |
| Xhosa     | 4.4%    |
| Afrikaans | 2.6%    |
| Ishiculu  | < 0.01% |

**Table 1.0.1:** Major languages spoken in KwaZulu-Natal (2105)

Americans set out to contribute to cross-nation collaborations had left. In 2034, a private corporation from Taiwan discovered an oil well just off Richards Bay, a town in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This incentivized more Chinese people to reside in eastern South Africa, and a community of Ishiculu speakers descended from a mixture of Zulu and Chinese people. By 2105, Ishiculu had about 1500 speakers in KwaZulu-Natal.

Ishiculu is now mostly spoken in KwaZulu-Natal near the east coast. In these communities where Ishiculu is spoken, Zulu and Chinese are usually also used. The Kuxutshwe people usually live and engage in social interactions with Zulu and Chinese people. Both Chinese and Ishiculu have seen a slight decrease in the number of speakers since the 2080s, a fact possibly attributed partially to their lack of legal status. There has been some but insufficient literature on marginalization of the Kuxutshwe people in both Zulu- and Chinese-speaking communities, but the existing research has indicated that the interactions between Ishiculu speakers and other peoples are mostly friendly and social, and that the marginalization stems from the way local educational and legal systems are set up. The major languages spoken in KwaZulu-Natal is listed in Table 1, and the racial makeup of Richards Bay is shown in Table 2.

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Black African                  | 43.0% |
| Coloured (Including Kuxutshwe) | 4.2%  |
| Indian/Asian                   | 19.2% |
| White                          | 33.1% |
| Other                          | 0.4%  |

**Table 1.0.2:** Racial makeup of Richards Bay (2101)



**Figure 1.0.1:** Migration of Chinese people to South Africa in the 2030s

# 2

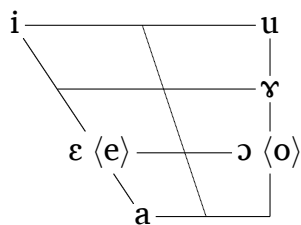
## Phonology

### 2.1 PHONEME INVENTORY OF ISHICULU<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pronounced [iʃɪˈʊːlù]

|                     |           | Labial              | Alveolar            | Postalveolar | Palatal | Velar               |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|
| Stop                | voiced    | b                   | d                   |              |         | g ⟨g⟩               |
|                     | voiceless | p                   | t                   |              |         | k                   |
|                     | aspirated | p <sup>h</sup> ⟨ph⟩ | t <sup>h</sup> ⟨th⟩ |              |         | k <sup>h</sup> ⟨kh⟩ |
| Nasal               |           | m                   | n                   |              | ɲ ⟨gn⟩  | ŋ ⟨ng⟩              |
| Trill               |           |                     | r                   |              |         |                     |
| Fricative           | voiced    |                     |                     | ʒ ⟨zh⟩       |         | ɣ ⟨gh⟩              |
|                     | voiceless | f                   | s                   | ʃ ⟨sh⟩       |         | x ⟨h⟩               |
| Affricate           | voiced    |                     | ɖz ⟨dz⟩             | ɖʒ ⟨j⟩       |         |                     |
|                     | voiceless |                     | ts ⟨ts⟩             | tʃ ⟨ch⟩      |         |                     |
| Lateral fricative   | voiced    |                     | ɬ                   |              |         |                     |
|                     | voiceless |                     | ɮ                   |              |         |                     |
| Approximant         |           | ʋ                   |                     |              | j ⟨y⟩   | w                   |
| Lateral approximant |           |                     | l                   |              |         |                     |
| Click               |           |                     | ɓ  ⟨c⟩              |              |         |                     |



## 2.2 SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

Possible syllable structures in Ishiculu are (C)V and N<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>V, where N<sub>1</sub> is a nasal with the same place of articulation as C<sub>1</sub>. For example:

Ishiculu /i.fɪ.ɓ|u.lu/ V.CV.CV.CV  
unjani /u.ɲɖʒa.ni/ V.NCV.CV

## 2.3 TONES AND STRESS

### 2.3.1 TONE CATEGORIES

Ishiculu has four tones.

| Description   | low | high | rising | falling |
|---------------|-----|------|--------|---------|
| IPA diacritic | à   | á    | ǎ      | â       |
| Tone contour  | 11  | 55   | 35     | 51      |

### 2.3.2 INTERACTIONS BETWEEN VOICED STOPS AND TONES

Voiced stops in Ishiculu (i.e. /b/, /d/, and /g/) add a low-tone onset to the normal tone.

| Normal tone | à (low)  | á (high)    | ǎ (rising)  | â (falling)         |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| New tone    | bà (low) | bǎ (rising) | bǎ (rising) | bǎ (rising-falling) |

### 2.3.3 STRESS

The stress of an Ishiculu word falls on the penultimate syllable and results in lengthening of the vowel. For example:

Ishiculu /i.ʃi.ᵐ|u.lu/ [iʃiᵐ|u:lu]  
unjani /u.ɲḁʒa.ni/ [uɲḁʒa:ni]



# 3

## Constituent order

Ishiculu is subject-prominent. The basic word order of Ishiculu is SVO. More accurately, its basic word order is subject-predicate, where the predicate can be a VP, an AdjP, or a PP.

Ishiculu uses both prepositions and postpositions. All prepositions are used to mark locative case, but overt postpositions are only used in marking lative and ablative.

- (1) Ari pa kiw-ioani ntaŋo kitabu.  
Ari not 3SG-like CLF.7 book(7)  
'Ari doesn't like the book.'
- (2) Tse-kiw-ioani-mpi ntaŋo kitabu.  
1PL-3SG-like-PST CLF.7 book(7)  
'We used to like the book.'

- (3) Ari fu-Philadelphia-tso.  
 Ari PREP.INT-Philadelphia-POST.ABL  
 ‘Ari is from Philadelphia.’
- (4) Fu-Philadelphia-ø tse-ke-ła-ki Ari  
 PREP.INT-Philadelphia-POST.STA 1PL-have-CAUS-3SG Ari  
 ntało kitabu.  
 CLF.7 book(7)  
 ‘We will give Ari the book in Philadelphia.’

A locative phrase can also occupy the subject position of verb and the subject will be moved to the object position.

- (5) Tsɤ-nji-tso ki-huma ntało ika.  
 PREP.SUR-table-POST.ABL 3SG-jump CLF.6 cat(6)  
 ‘Off the table jumps a cat.’
- (6) Fu-heje-ø ki-paka i ntochɤ.  
 PREP.INT-courtyard-POST.ABL 3SG-park CLF.8 car(8)  
 ‘In the courtyard is parked a car.’

To put the emphasis on the object, it is possible to have OSV word order, but there will need to be a classifier for the object remaining in the original position.

- (7) Kitabu tse-ki-so-mbi ntało.  
 book(7) 1PL-3SG-read-PST CLF.7  
 ‘The book, we have read it.’
- (8) ntochɤ ni-kiw-ioani i.  
 car(8) 1SG-3SG-like CLF.8  
 ‘The car, I like it.’

### 1. Verb-Object

- (9) Tse-kiw-ioani-mbi ntało kitabu.  
 1PL-3SG-like-PST CLF.7 book(7)  
 ‘We used to like the book.’

## 2. Classifier-**Noun**

- (10) i        ntochɣ  
      CLF.8 car(8)  
      ‘the car(s)’

## 3. **Noun**-Adjective

- (11) ntochɣ i-caca  
      car(8) 8-big  
      ‘big car(s)’

## 4. Numeral-Classifier-**Noun**

A numeral modifying a noun requires a classifier, which follows the numeral.

- (12) nta    ntaɔ kitabu  
      three CLF.7 book(7)  
      ‘three books’

## 5. Demonstrative-**Noun**

- (13) laba    ntaɔ kitabu  
      these CLF.7 book(7)  
      ‘these books’

## 6. **Noun**-Genitive

- (14) ntaɔ kitabu    ce-mama  
      CLF.7 book(7) GEN-mother  
      ‘mother’s book(s)’

## 7. Preposition-**Noun**-Postposition

Note that the presence of both prepositions and postpositions is uncommon, especially among VO languages.

- (15) fu Philadelphia tso  
 PREP.INT Philadelphia POST.ABL  
 ‘from Philadelphia’

8. Preposition-Demonstrative-Numeral-Classifier-**Noun**-  
 Adjective-Possessor-Postposition

- (16) fu laba nta u conkei u-caca ce-John  
 PREP.INT these three CLF.4 house 4-big GEN-John  
 tso  
 POST.ABL  
 ‘out of these three big houses of John’
- (17) Fu u conkei u-łoko tse-ke-ła-ki Ari  
 PREP.INT CLF.4 house 4-red 1PL-have-CAUS-3SG Ari  
 nta ntało kitabu ce-Mel  
 three CLF.7 book(7) POSS-Mel  
 ‘We will give Ari Mel’s three books in the red house.’

# 4

## Verbs

### 4.1 AGREEMENTS

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.

There are both inflectional and derivational affixes in Ishiculu, while most inflectional affixes are attached to verbs.

Ishiculu follows accusative alignment. The verb is marked according to a nominative-accusative system. The verb stem is inflected based on the person, number, and for 3rd person nominal phrases, the noun class. The structure of an inflected Ishiculu verb consists of nominative agreement, dative agreement, accusative 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.

Ishiculu has a rich agreement system on verbs. In this sense, it is predominantly head-marking.

- (18) *Shi-shiy-ioani-∅*      ntaŋo kitabu.  
 1PL-CL7.SG-like-PRS CLF.7 book(7)  
 ‘We (will) like the book.’

Ishiculu follows accusative alignment. The verb is marked according to a nominative-accusative system. The verb stem is inflected based on the person, number, and for 3rd person nominal phrases, the noun class.

| Sbj/obj prefixes | singular |          | plural   |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                  | before C | before V | before C | before V |
| 1st person       | -ngi-    | -ngiw-   | -shi-    | -shiy-   |
| 2nd person       | -u-      | -uw-     | -ni-     | -niy-    |
| CL 1/2           | -ka-     |          | -ba-     |          |
| CL 3/4           | -u-      | -uw-     | -i-      | -iy-     |
| CL 5/6           | -ŋi-     | -ŋiy-    | -a-      |          |
| CL 7/8           | -shi-    | -shiy-   | -zi-     | -ziy-    |

- (19) Ari pa ki-so      ntaŋo kitabu.  
 Ari not 3SG-like CLF.7 book(7)

‘Ari doesn’t read the book.’

- (20) Ari pa kiw-ioani ntało kitabu.  
Ari not 3SG-like CLF.7 book(7)  
‘Ari doesn’t like the book.’

## 4.2 TENSES

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.

- (21) Tse-kiw-ioani-ø ntało kitabu.  
1PL-3SG-like-PRS CLF.7 book(7)  
‘We (will) like the book.’
- (22) Tse-kiw-ioani-mbi ntało kitabu.  
1PL-3SG-like-PST CLF.7 book(7)  
‘We used to like the book.’

## 4.3 IMPERATIVE

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

|          | Alone       | With object |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Singular | <i>-a</i>   | <i>-e</i>   |
| Plural   | <i>-ani</i> | <i>-eni</i> |

- (23) shi-a  
read\_aloud-IMP  
‘Read aloud!’
- (24) ki-shi-e ntało kitabu  
read\_aloud-IMP CLF.7 book(7)  
‘Read the book aloud!’

## 4.4 VALENCY-CHANGING PROCESSES

### 4.4.1 PASSIVE

Morphological passive in Ishiculu is marked with *-walɣ* and decreases the valence of transitive verbs.

- (25) Ntało kitabu shi-so-*walɣ*-mbi.  
CLF.7 book(7) 7-read-PASS-PST  
'The book was read.'

- (26) U -bon -*walɣ* -mbi.  
2SG -see -PASS -PST  
'You were seen.'

### 4.4.2 IMPERSONAL

When the verb is impersonal, it does not bear a subject concord prefix.

Ishiculu allows for impersonal meteorological predicates.

- (27) Cofi ha-mbi.  
yesterday rain-PST  
'It rained yesterday.'

- (28) Tumɣ rɣ.  
tomorrow hot  
'It will be hot tomorrow.'

Impersonal construction is also used for indefinite subjects.

- (29) Pa ngi-shi-so ntało kitabu.  
not 1SG-7-read CLF.7 book  
'I don't read the book.'
- (30) Pa shi-so ntało kitabu.  
not 7-read CLF.7 book  
'One doesn't/shouldn't read the book.'



#### 4.4.3 CAUSATIVE

(

The suffix *-la* 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.

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

)

The suffix *-la* marks the causative form of a verb. The causer of the causative verb is marked with an additional prefix.

- (32) Ngi-ka-shi-so-*la*                      Ari ntało kitabu.  
1SG-1-7-have-CAUS Ari CLF.7 book(7)  
'I (will) make Ari read the book.'
- (33) Fu-Philadelphia ngi-ka-shi-ke-*la*                      Ari ntało kitabu.  
in-Philadelphia 1SG-1-7-have-CAUS Ari CLF.7 book(7)  
'I (will) give the book to Ari in Philadelphia.'

The suffix *-la* marks the causative form of a verb. The causer of the causative verb is marked with an additional prefix on the verb.

- (34) Ngi-ka-shi-so-*la*                      Ari ntało kitabu.  
1SG-1-7-have-CAUS Ari CLF.7 book(7)  
'I (will) make Ari read the book.'

#### DITRANSITIVE

Prototypical verbs in Ishiculu are transitive at most, and verbs that semantically require three thematic core arguments are usually expressed through causatives of transitive verbs.

- (35) Fu-Philadelphia ngi-ka-shi-ke-ḷa Ari ntaḷo kitabu.  
 in-Philadelphia 1SG-1-7-have-CAUS Ari CLF.7 book(7)  
 'I (will) give Ari the book in Philadelphia.'
- (36) Wʁ babamama ba-ngiw-u-nde-ḷa-mbi mina  
 CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-1SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 1SG  
 shizi.  
 cheese(4)  
 'My parents fed me cheese.'

#### 4.4.4 PASSIVE OF CAUSATIVE

The causee or the object can be promoted to the subject position with the passive construction. Following the parallelism between ditransitive and causative verbs, their passive constructions are also indistinguishable in morphology.

##### PROMOTING CAUSEE

This refers to the passive construction similar to the following:

- (37) Passive of causative of intransitive in English  
 John makes me cringe. → I am made to cringe (by John).
- (38) Passive of causative of transitive in English  
 John makes the computer change the date. → The computer is made to change the date (by John).
- (39) Passive of ditransitive in English  
 John gives the teacher the book. → The teacher is given the book (by John).

This construction in Ishiculu is formed by a passive suffix *-walʁ* after the causative suffix. The personal suffix of the causer on the verb is then dropped.

- (40) Passive of causative of intransitive in Ishiculu

- a. Ngi-ka -hulu-ła-mbi John.  
1SG-1.SG -cry-CAUS-PST John  
'I made John cry.'
- b. John ka -hulu-ła-walʁ-mbi.  
John 1.SG -cry-CAUS-PASS-PST  
'John was made to cry.'

(41) Passive of ditransitive/causative of transitive in Ishiculu

- a. Shiy-u-ko -meʔi-ła-mbi hehe.  
1PL-2SG-5.SG -receive\_by\_mail-CAUS-PST cake(5)  
'We mailed you cake.'
- b. U-ko -meʔi-ła-walʁ-mbi hehe.  
2SG-5.SG -receive\_by\_mail-CAUS-PASS-PST cake(5)  
'You were mailed cake.'

PROMOTING OBJECT

There is no passivization of a causative verb that directly promotes the underlying object, but it is possible to passivize the underlying verb, promoting the object to the causee position before promoting it further to the subject position of the matrix clause. As the subject in the active voice becomes impossible to be salient in the passive, the causee becomes ineffable in this passive construction.

(42) a. Active voice

John ka-u-shi -ke-ła meyi shʔntaʔo  
John 1.SG-3.SG-7.SG -have-CAUS CLF.3 teacher(3)  
kitabʔ.  
CLF.7 book(7)  
'John gives the teacher the book.'

b. Impossibility of direct promotion of object

\* Ntaʔo kitabʔ shi-u -ke-ła-walʁ meyi  
CLF.7 book(7) 7.SG-3.SG -have-CAUS-PASS CLF.3

shɣ.

teacher(3)

Intended meaning: 'The book is given to the teacher.'

c. Causative of passive

John ka-u-shi -ke-walɣ-ɬa ntaɔ kitabu.

John 1.SG-3.SG-7.SG -have-PASS-CAUS CLF.7 book(7)

'John gives the book.' (lit. 'John makes the book be given.')

d. Passive of causative of passive

Ntaɔ kitabu shi-ke-walɣ-ɬa-walɣ.

CLF.7 book(7) 7.SG-have-PASS-CAUS-PASS

'The book is given.' (lit. 'The book is made to be had.')

e. Ineffability of the causee

\* Ntaɔ kitabu shi-u -ke-walɣ-ɬa-walɣ meyi

CLF.7 book(7) 7.SG-3.SG -have-PASS-CAUS-PASS CLF.3

shɣ.

teacher(3)

Intended meaning: 'The book is given to the teacher.'

(lit. 'The book is made to be had.')

# 5

## Adpositions

Ishiculu nouns do not exhibit case markings but rather receive prepositions for the location of the locative case, and postpositions for the direction of any movement involved.

|                      | -ø: static          | <i>tsɔ</i> : centrifugal | <i>ʒu</i> : centripetal |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>fu</i> : interior | ‘in, at, inside’    | ‘out of’                 | ‘into’                  |
| <i>tsɤ</i> : surface | ‘on the surface of’ | ‘off the surface of’     | ‘onto the surface of’   |

- (43) Fu            Philadelphia ø            tse-ke-ɭa-ki            Ari  
PREP.INT Philadelphia POST.STA 1SG-have-CAUS-3SG Ari  
ntaɭo kitabu.  
CLF.7 book(7)  
‘We will give Ari the book in Philadelphia.’

- (44) Ari fu-Philadelphia-tso.  
Ari INT-Philadelphia-CENTF  
'Ari is from Philadelphia.'

# 6

## Classifiers

On WALS, there are 400 languages surveyed in the feature of numeral classifiers, and 140 of them have classifiers accompanying nouns when numerals are used. Among them, the three Chinese languages surveyed, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hokkien all have numeral classifiers. Even though in traditional grammar, Zulu is not considered to have any classifier, the noun classes in Zulu fit nicely with the classifiers coming from Chinese languages, especially from Cantonese, where classifiers are more versatile, not just used with numerals. Ishiculu employs classifiers to company nouns when they refer to entities in a non-generic ways. The classifier modifying a noun is determined by the class of the modified noun.

| noun class | classifier |
|------------|------------|
| 1          | wo         |
| 2          | wɣ         |
| 3          | meyi       |
| 4          | u          |
| 5          | ishi       |
| 6          | ĩgi        |
| 7          | ntalo      |
| 8          | ažo        |

When the noun is used generically instead of to refer to its instances, we don't use classifiers.

- (45) Ngi-u-nde-mbi shidzi.  
 1SG-4.SG-eat-PST cheese(4)  
 'I ate cheese.'

When the noun is specified, a classifier will need to accompany it.

- (46) Ngi-u-nde-mbi u shidzi *ce-John*.  
 1SG-4.SG-eat-PST CLF.4 cheese(4) GEN-John  
 'I ate John's cheese.'
- (47) Ngi-u-nde-mbi *ligha u* shidzi.  
 1SG-4.SG-eat-PST this CLF.4 cheese(4)  
 'I ate this cheese.'
- (48) Ngi-u-nde-mbi u shidzi *uw-uw-ioani wona*.  
 1SG-4.SG-eat-PST CLF.4 cheese(4) 2SG-4.SG-like PRN.4.SG  
 'I ate the cheese that you like.'

A classifier is required when a numeral modifies the noun.

- (49) Ngi-zhi-ke nta ntało kitabu.  
 1SG-7.PL-have three CLF.7 book  
 'I have three books.'



# 7

## Embeddings

### 7.1 COORDINATION

Nouns, verbs, and clauses all coordinate in Ishiculu. The coordination of nouns makes use of the conjunction *hɣ*; that of verbs makes use of *futi*; and clauses coordinate by juxtaposing.

### 7.2 RELATIVE CLAUSES

Relative clauses are restrictive in Ishiculu. They are externally headed and post-nominal. The canonical construction of the relative clauses relativizes the subject in the clause and does not include a complementizer or relative pronoun.

- (50) Ngiw-uw-ioani meyi shɿ  
 1SG-3.SG-like CLF.3 teacher(3)  
 u-ka-shi-ke-ɬa-mbi Ari ntaɬo kitabu.  
 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari CLF.7 book(7)  
 ‘I like the teacher that gave Ari the book.’

Direct objects cannot be relativized through the same construction. Rather, the speaker makes use of two strategies, the first of which is to passivize the verb so that the direct object is promoted to the subject position.

- (51) \* Ngiw-shi-ioani ntaɬo kitabu meyi shɿ  
 1SG-7.SG-like CLF.7 book(7) CLF.3 teacher(3)  
 u-so-mbi.  
 3.SG-read-PST  
 Intended meaning: ‘I like the book that the teacher read.’
- (52) Ngiw-shi-ioani ntaɬo kitabu u-so-waɿ-mbi.  
 1SG-7.SG-like CLF.7 book(7) 3.SG-read-PASS-PST  
 ‘I like the book that was read.’

The other strategy is to use a resumptive pronoun in the relative clause.

- (53) Ngiw-shi-ioani ntaɬo kitabu meyi shɿ  
 1SG-7.SG-like CLF.7 book(7) CLF.3 teacher(3)  
 u-so-mbi sona.  
 3.SG-read-PST PRN.7.SG  
 ‘I like the book that the teacher read.’

# 8

## Interrogatives

### 8.1 POLAR QUESTIONS

Polar questions are formed in Ishiculu with the polar question particle *le* at the end of the sentence.

- (54) a. Meyi shɣ                      u-ka-shi-ke-ɬa-mpi                      Ari  
         CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari  
         ntaɬo kitabu.  
         CLF.7 book(7)  
         ‘The teacher gave Ari the book.’
- b. Meyi shɣ                      u-ka-shi-ke-ɬa-mpi                      Ari  
         CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari  
         ntaɬo kitabu    le?  
         CLF.7 book(7) Q  
         ‘Did the teacher give Ari the book?’

### 8.1.1 RESPONSE TO POLAR QUESTIONS

Ishiculu uses particles *yebo*, ‘yes’ and *cha*, ‘no’ to respond to polar questions. Ishiculu’s response strategy is also truth-based; that is, *cha* confirms a negative question, and *yebo* contradicts the negation of a negative question.

- (55) a. Meyi shʁ u-ka-shi-ke-ɬa-mpi Ari  
 CLF.3 teacher(3) 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari  
 ntaɬo kitabu le?  
 CLF.7 book(7) Q  
 ‘Did the teacher give Ari the book?’
- b. Yebo.  
 yes  
 ‘Yes(, the teacher gave Ari the book).’
- c. Cha.  
 no  
 ‘No(, the teacher did not give Ari the book).’
- (56) a. Meyi shʁ pa u-ka-shi-ke-ɬa-mpi Ari  
 CLF.3 teacher(3) not 3.SG-1.SG-7.SG-have-CAUS-PST Ari  
 ntaɬo kitabu le?  
 CLF.7 book(7) Q  
 ‘Did the teacher not give Ari the book?’
- b. Yebo.  
 yes  
 ‘Yes(, the teacher gave Ari the book).’
- c. Cha.  
 no  
 ‘No(, the teacher did not give Ari the book).’

## 8.2 CONTENT QUESTIONS

Content questions are formed with the question particle *le* at the end of the sentence. Some WH-words in Ishiculu include *uba*(2), ‘who;’ *uni*(4), ‘what;’ *una*, ‘where.’

When the WH-word is the subject, the question is formed with the WH-word *in situ*.

- (57) a. Wɣ babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ɬa-mbi wena  
 CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 2SG  
 shizi.  
 cheese(4)  
 ‘Your parents fed you cheese.’
- b. Uba ka-uw-u-nde-ɬa-mbi wena shizi  
 who(2) 2.SG-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST 2SG cheese(4)  
 le?  
 Q  
 ‘Who fed you cheese?’

Non-subject WH-words need to be moved to the post-verbal position.

- (58) Wɣ babamama ba-ka-u-nde-ɬa-mbi uba  
 CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2.SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST who  
 shizi le?  
 cheese(4) Q  
 ‘To whom did your parents feed cheese?’
- (59) Wɣ babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ɬa-mbi uni wena  
 CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-4.SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST what 2SG  
 le?  
 Q  
 ‘What did your parents feed you?’
- (60) Wɣ babamama ba-uw-u-nde-ɬa-mbi una wena  
 CLF.2 parents(2) 2.PL-2SG-4.SG-eat-CAUS-PST where 2SG

cheese(4) Q

When there are more than one WH-word, one of them is regarded as the primary WH-word, which follows the WH-word movement described above. The remaining WH-words are *in situ*.

- 30