CHAPTER X

THE VERB

§312.—Definition: A Verb is a word which signifies an action connected with a substantive or the state in which a substantive is, and is brought into concordial agreement therewith (except when used imperatively) by the subjectival concord.\(^1\)

§313.—The Nature of the Verb in Zulu: The verb, except in the imperative and the infinitive, is composed of at least two parts, (1) the verb-stem, which may undergo various inflexions, and (2) the subjectival concord, which may alter for certain classes in different conjugations and moods. This concord has sometimes been regarded as a pronoun, but it is not in itself a word; it is merely a formative. The verb may also contain auxiliary formatives and objectival concords.

In Zulu the verb is divided into two conjugations, positive and negative. Each conjugation has five moods, indicative, subjunctive, participial, potential and contingent, in addition to the infinitive and imperative forms. The indicative mood contains most of the tenses, divided according to time into remote past, immediate past, present, immediate future and remote future. According to implication these tenses are divided into simple, progressive and exclusive; and these implications may be subdivided according to manner into indefinite, continuous and perfect.

\(^1\)This definition is unsatisfactory in so far as it allows of the inclusion of copulatives formed from relatives.

THE VERB

Verbs in Zulu may further be classified according to varieties, taking into consideration the number of syllables in the stem, and the question as to whether the stem is primitive or derived.

§314.—The Varieties of the Verb: In Zulu, verbs are divided into the following four main varieties:

1. Regular disyllabic verb-stems, ending in -a:
   Examples:
   thanda (love), geza (wash), funa (want).

2. Monosyllabic verb-stems, never used as complete words in the simple forms:
   Examples:
   -ya (go), -da (eat), -za (come).
   Note the defective forms -thi (say) and -sho (say); all others end regularly in the vowel -a.

3. Vowel verb stems: A number of verb stems in Zulu commences in a vowel. As with the monosyllabic stems, these are never used as complete words without inflexion.
   Examples:
   -enza (do, make), -ona (sin, spoil), -esaba (fear).
   Note the defective form -azi, ending in the vowel -i; all regular vowel-verbs end in -a.

4. Derived verb stems; usually of more syllables than two, formed (a) from other verb stems, verbal derivatives; (b) from noun or adjectival roots by suffix, denominative verbs; or (c) from ideophones and interjunctives by suffix, deideophonic and deinterjective verbs.
   Examples:
   (a) thandisisa (like intensely)
   (b) hlonipha (be wise)
   (c) dazuka (split apart).

Note: The term 'verbal derivative' is generally applied to method (a), the verbal derivatives being formed, generally by suffix, from the simple verb stems.
Predicative Conords

§315.—There are two types of concord used with the verb in Zulu, the subjectival concord and the objectival concord. The former shows concordial agreement with the subject of the verb, and the latter shows concordial agreement with the object of the verb. Except in the cases of the imperative and infinitive, the subjectival concord must always be expressed in order to convert the verb stem into a complete word, even if the substantival subject is itself expressed. In the case of the objectival concord, however, it is often unnecessary and at times incorrect to use it when the substantival object is expressed.

§316.—The Subjectival Conords:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Singular)</th>
<th>(Plural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td>ngi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pers.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>Cl. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ha-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>li-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>si-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ku-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The second person singular concord u- is of low tone distinguishing it from the third person Class 1 sing. and Class 2 sing. concord u-, which is of relatively high tone. Similarly the first person plural concord si- is of low tone distinguishing it from the third person Class 4 sing. concord si-, which is of relatively high tone.

§317.—The above concords undergo modification when used with the past auxiliary formative, a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Singular)</th>
<th>(Plural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td>nga:-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sa:-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§318.—In the subjunctive and potential moods, the concord of the 3rd person Class 1 sing. is -a.

In certain tenses of the negative conjugation and in the subjunctive mood tenses used imperatively, the following changes take place:

3rd pers. Cl. 1 s. u- becomes either ka- or a-.
3rd pers. Cl. 2 s. and 2nd pers. sing. u- becomes wu-.
3rd pers. Cl. 3 p. a- becomes either ka- or wa-, or remains as a-.
3rd pers. Cls. 5 s. and 2 p. i- becomes yi.

In the participial mood the concords of the 3rd person Classes 1 s., 1 p. and 3 p. are respectively e-, he- and e-.

§319.—The Objectival Conords: Wherever the subjectival concord contains a consonant, the objectival concord is the same; but where the subjectival concord is composed of a vowel only, the objectival concord differs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Singular)</th>
<th>(Plural)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td>ngi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>si-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pers.</td>
<td>ku-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ni-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>Cl. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ba-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>li-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>si-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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6. lu- ziz-
7. bu-
8. ku-
10. ku-.

Note 1: The objectival concord of the second person singular kuri is of the same tone as that of the third person, Classes 8 and 10; and the objectival concord zii of Classes 4, 5 and 6 plural is of the same tone as the reflexive prefix zii (see §404).

Note 2: In every case, without exception, the objectival concord must immediately precede the verb stem. Auxiliary formatives may push the subjectival concord some distance away from the verb stem, but no formative whatsoever may come between the objectival concord and the verb stem. The same applies to the reflexive prefix (see §404).

Regular Disyllabic Verb Stems

§320.—In Zulu the vast majority of simple verb stems is composed of two syllables, commences in a consonant, and ends in the vowel -a. With the inflexion of the verb, this final a- may give place to some other vowel or to some derivative suffix. There is one part of this regular verb stem, however, which does not change; and this invariable part is called the root.

Examples:

(Verb stem) (Root)
Thanda -thand-
geza -gez-
funa -fun-
hamba -hamb-
shaya -shay-

Beyond these roots of the regular disyllabic verb it is impossible to analyse, and in many instances these roots

show a close connection (often varying according to definite laws of phonetic change) with the roots found in many other Bantu languages.

Monosyllabic Verb Stems

§321.—In Zulu, as in most Bantu languages, is a number of commonly-used stems comprised each of a single monosyllable. In Zulu these stems never appear as complete words in their simple forms, but are always accompanied by some formative; hence they are indicated with a hyphen immediately preceding them. It is necessary to treat these monosyllabic stems as constituting a separate variety of verb, because they undergo distinctive inflexion in the formation of the imperative and of the diminutive form. There are three types of monosyllabic verb stem in Zulu:

1 Regular, 2 Stems with latent -i, and 3 Defective.

§322.—List of Regular Monosyllabic Verb Stems:
-aba (be, become) -nya (excrete)
dla (eat) -pha (give)
dfa (die) -sa (dawn)
khala (become dark) -sha (burn)
kha (dip up) -sha1 (pour, name)
lwa (fight) -wia (fall)
na (rain) -ya (go to).

§323.—List of Monosyllabic Verb Stems with Latent -i:
-ma (stand) -sa (come)
mba (dig) -wia (hear).
-via (increase)

These stems are derived from more primitive vowel verbs, -ima, -imba, -iva, -iza and -izwa.2 The latent influence of the vowel i- is only felt when, in the conjugation, the vowel a- would normally come immediately before the stem, in which case a and i coalesce to form e. Compare for instance: ngaya (I went) with ngela (I came); but manguye (let me go) and mangize (let me come); or ukuza (to go) and ukuza (to come).

1Under phonetic influences, however, as in the formation of the passive (hamba>hanjwa) and of nouns, when a nasal in the prefix may de-aspirate an initial aspirated explosive or affect an implosive, there may be purely phonetic changes, e.g., thanda>thandolo; tonga>imbongi.

1See this verb in connection with vowel verbs, § 327.
2Cf. the present Lamba verbs ima (stand), imba (dig) and isa (come)
§324.—Defective Monosyllabic Verb Stems: There are only two of these in Zulu, viz., -thi (say) and -sho (say). They are treated in detail in the next Chapter.

Vowel Verb Stems

§325.—In Zulu there are numerous verb stems which commence in vowels, and these are treated in a distinctive way in certain portions of the verb conjugation, and with a special modification of the concords immediately before them. It is therefore necessary to classify them as a separate variety of the verb, and in this connection the useful term 'vowel verb' has been applied by several Zulu grammarians. There are two main types of vowel verbs in Zulu:

1. Those of which the stem invariably commences in a vowel, this vowel being secondary, either a-, e- or o-.
   It is noteworthy that there is none commencing in either of the primary vowels i- or u-.

2. Those which have two forms, either of which may be used at will, the first form commencing in a vowel, usually e-, and the second form being a regular verb without any initial vowel.

There is one defective vowel verb also.

As with monosyllabic verb stems, the vowel verb stems never comprise complete words in their simple form, hence a hyphen is placed before them.

§326.—List of the more common Regular Vowel Verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zulu</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ase (distribute)</td>
<td>anela (be sufficient)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ahula (conquer)</td>
<td>anga (kiss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-akha (build)</td>
<td>aphuka² (break)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ala (refuse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-aluka (go out to graze)</td>
<td>-ebya (steal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plait)</td>
<td>-ebula³ (strip bark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-alusa (herd)</td>
<td>-ehla (go down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-anda (increase)</td>
<td>-ela (winnow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Except when preceded by a subjectival concord in a- or e-, which lapses before the strong secondary vowel of the verb, e.g., amadoda akha izindlu (the men are building houses).
² Or -ephuka.
³ Or -obula.

§327.—Vowel Verbs with variant Non-vowel Forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zulu</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ehanda (lean against)</td>
<td>banda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-edlula (pass)</td>
<td>dlula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ejunda (learn)</td>
<td>funda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ejuzi (resemble)</td>
<td>juzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-egwala (be full)</td>
<td>gwalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ejwayela (be accustomed)</td>
<td>jwayela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-emitha (be pregnant)</td>
<td>mitha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-emuka (go away)</td>
<td>muka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-esuka (go away)</td>
<td>suka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-etha (pour, name)</td>
<td>tha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ethemba (hope)</td>
<td>themba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ethwala (carry)</td>
<td>thwala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§328.—Defective Vowel Verb: In Zulu there is one defective vowel verb, viz., -azi (know). All normal vowel verbs end in the vowel -a in the simple stem; with -azi there is no final vowel inflexion to indicate the present negative or the subjunctive mood (cf. §481).

1 Occasionally -embatha.
² Occasionally -aphuka.
³ Occasionally -emuka.
⁴ Or -ebya.
⁵ Or -obula.
⁶ Or -jwayela.
The Inflexion of the Verb Stem

§320.—Apart from the inflexions to be noted in the formation of the derived verbs, the verb stem may be inflected in the following ways:

(1) To form the negative conjugation, principally by suffixing -i in present time and -anga in past time, but also sometimes with the assistance of negative prefixal or auxiliary formatives.

(2) To form the present tense of the subjunctive mood, by suffixing -e.

(3) To form the perfect stem, generally by suffixing -ile, but also by special inflexion if the verb is a derivative.

The Perfect Stem

§330.—Generally speaking in Zulu the perfect stem is used in the formation of the immediate past tenses, as will be seen when the verb scheme is analysed in the next chapter; but with stative verbs, i.e., with verbs which indicate a state already completed and still persisting, the perfect stem is used in present tense formation also. For the occurrence and general use of the perfect stem, see the paradigms in Chapter XI.

§331.—List of the more common Stative Verbs:

- boshwa (be in prison)
- bonakala (be visible)
- buhana (be gathered together)
- casha (hide)
- cindezeleka (be in trouble)
- cweila (be under water)
- -emiha (be pregnant)
- -enaba (sit with legs out)
- -enama (be happy)
- -esuha (be full)
- -eihamba (trust)
- -fa (die)

- klakanipha (be wise)
- klala (sit)
- klonipha (pay respect)
- jwayela (be accustomed to)
- kathala (be tired)
- khululeka (be at freedom)
- khuluphala (be stout)
- kwela (ride on)
- lala (sleep, lie down)
- lamba (be hungry)
- -ma (stand)
- -oma (be fat)

- hamba (travel)
- geza (wash)
- bona (see)
- bonisisa (see clearly)
- thandeka (be lovable)
- khumula (take off)

- -hambile
- -gezile
- -bonile
- -bonisile
- -thandekile
- -khumule.

§332.—Rule for the formation of the Perfect Stem: Apart from some irregular forms, there are seven rules governing the formation of the perfect stem:

Rule 1. The general rule is to substitute -ile for the final vowel of the verb stem.

- hamba (travel) > -hambile
- geza (wash) > -gezile
- bona (see) > -bonile
- bonisisa (see clearly) > -bonisile
- thandeka (be lovable) > -thandekile.

§333.—Rule 2: All applied, reverse and perfective forms of the verb (ending in -ela, -eela, -ula and -ulula) change final -a to -e.

- bophelela (tie for) > -bophele
- hlabelela (sing) > -hlabele
- khumula (take off) > -khumule.

§334.—Rule 3: Derivative verbs, having a derivative suffix composed of a consonant preceded and followed by the vowel -a, change each case of that vowel to -e.

Recipr.1: -ana thandana (love one another) > -thandene

Neuter: -akala bonakala (be visible) > -bonakele

Extens.: -ala lala (sleep) > -lele

Stative: -ama cathama (stalk) > -catheme

Contact.: -atha phatha (hold) > -phethe

Dispers.: -alala nyamalala (disappear) > -nyamalele

Miscell.: { -awa bulawa (be killed) > -bulwe
- -asa ethwasa (come out) > -ethwese.

§335.—Rule 4: A contracted perfect is formed by substituting long, stressed -e for the final vowel of the simple stem. The occurrence and significance of this form are discussed in Chapter XXI.

1 For the significance of these terms see §§ 341-395.
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§336.—Rule 5: Under certain circumstances (see Chap. XXI), the general rule may be applied to words, to which Rules 2 and 3 normally apply. Such forms as *bulalile*, *hambelile*, are thus found.

§337.—Rule 6: Of diminutive forms of verbs, formed by reduplication of the stem, the final part only takes the perfect:

zwayizwa (hear a little) > zwayizwile or zwayizwé:
gijigijima (run a little) > gijigijimile or gijigijimé:

§338.—Rule 7: The perfects of passives are formed by substituting *-iwe* for the final *-wa* of the stem.

bonwa (be seen) > -boniwe
banjwa (be caught) > -banjiwe
balekwa (be run away) > -balekiwe
thuliswa (be silenced) > -thulisiwe
lunyisiswa (be bitten hard) > -lunyisisiwe
hlanjululwa (be cleansed) > -hlanjululisiwe.

Except derivatives ending in *-elwa*, which change *-elwa* to *-elwe*:

fikela (be visited) > -fikelwe
shunyayelwa (be preached) > -shunyayelwe
hlatshelwelwa (be sung) > -hlatshelwelwe.

Contracted forms according to Rule 4 are also formed from passives, e.g., *-bonwe*, *-thulisiwe*.

§339.—The following verbs have irregular forms of the perfect stem:

hlala (sit) > -hlezi or -hleli
-ma (stand) > -mi
-sho (say) > -shilo or -shó:
-emilha (be pregnant) > -emigthi
-esutha (be full) > -esuthi.

Notice, however, that the defective verbs *-azi* and *-thi* have regular perfects, *-azile* or *-azé*; and *-hlile* or *-hlé*.

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Derived Verb Stems

§340.—As was noted in §314 the derived verb stems in Zulu are of three types, those formed from other verb stems, those formed from noun or adjectival roots, and those formed from ideophones or interjectives. These stems will now be considered in this order, those formed from verb stems being treated under the heading of Verbal Derivatives. While the majority of derived stems are of more than two syllables, it will be noticed that there are a few, such as many passives, and those formed from monosyllabic verb stems, monosyllabic adjectival root or monosyllabic ideophones, which may be composed of two syllables only.

Verbal Derivatives

§341.—In Zulu, verb stems may be inflected in various ways to form derivative verbs, each of which is conjugated in the different moods and tenses as is the simple stem. Verbal derivatives are, in the main, formed by suffixal inflexion. In this way definite variations of meaning are derived, variations which in English can only be made by the use of auxiliary verbs, adverbs or prepositions. The most important regular verbal derivatives in Zulu are (1) the Passive, (2) the Neuter, (3) the Applied, (4) the Reciprocal, (5) the Causative, (6) the Intensive, and (7) the Diminutive. In addition to these, there are representatives of a number of other derivatives, formed regularly in some other Bantu languages, but no longer regularly formed in Zulu. In some of these latter derivatives there are special differences in form to distinguish the transitive from the intransitive, differences which are noticed also in verbs derived from ideophones.

The Passive

§342.—The passive in Zulu indicates that the subject is acted upon by an agent, and carries the same force as does the passive voice in English. The agent of the action