A Morphological Description of Nouns in Kichonyi: A Basic Linguistic Analysis

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100601316

Received: 28 June 2026; Accepted: 04 July 2026; Published: 18 July 2026

ABSTRACT

The research aimed to provide a comprehensive morphological analysis of the internal structure of nouns in the Kichonyi language. The Kichonyi language, predominantly spoken in Kilifi South region, specifically within the areas of Chonyi, Junju, and Kikambala to Mtwapa, served as the focus of the study. The objectives were threefold: to identify and describe the different types of nouns in Kichonyi, to analyze the phonological conditions that trigger the distribution of the singular and plural noun markers in Kichonyi and to establish the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns. The study was carried out using a descriptive research design with data collected from Dzitsoni, Chasimba and Mwarakaya regions through interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. Both the purposive and snowball sample techniques were employed to select particpants encompassing both the non-educated and educated language informants. As a preliminary study into the morphological description of nouns, the study applied the Basic Linguistic Theory developed by Dixon (2010) to analyze Kichonyi nouns.The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the internal composition of Kichonyi nouns by shedding light on identification of nouns, analyzing what triggers the distribution nouns, identifying the phonological triggers for singular and plural markers and detailing the morph phonological processes involved in noun formation.The study revealed that Kichonyi has 19 noun classes primarily derived from verbs, adjectives, and other nouns. Furthermore, nouns in Kichonyi are formed from compounding, reduplication, borrowing blending and clipping. Both consonants and vowels provided conditions for the distribution of singular and plural noun markers in Kichonyi. The morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns are consonant weakening, nasalization homorganic nasal assimilation Ganda law, labialization, glide formation, deletion, and vowel insertion. Morpho-phonological rules were provided for all the processes involved. The findings should be useful in documenting the linguistic features of Kichonyi language, offer insights into the structure of Kichonyi nouns and serve as a foundation for creating language learning materials that can enhance literacy programmes in Kichonyi.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discusses the general background to the study, which includes the background of the language and the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and the questions of the study. The researcher will also discuss the significance of the study and its scope and delimitations.

Background to the Language and study

The present study examined the Kichonyi language, a Bantu language within the Niger–Congo phylum and a member of the Mijikenda linguistic subgroup. Speakers of Kichonyi referred to individually as Muchonyi and collectively as Achonyi, traditionally engage in agriculture, with palm cultivation constituting a primary source of livelihood. The Achonyi, together with eight related ethnolinguistic groups; Akambe, Aribe, Ajibana, Akauma, Agiryama, Aduruma, Adigo, and Arabai, form the broader Mijikenda community. In Guthrie's (1948) classification, Kichonyi is placed in Zone E, Group 72. The Achonyi primarily inhabit Chonyi and Chasimba in Kilifi South Sub-County, as well as Mwarakaya, Mtepeni, Junju, and Shimo la Tewa, with additional populations residing in Matsangoni and Sokoke in Kilifi North Sub-County. According to the 2019 Kenya Population Census, the Mijikenda number approximately

1.45 million, of whom an estimated 310,000 are Kichonyi speakers. As the second most widely spoken Mijikenda language after Agiryama, Kichonyi represents a significant component of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the region, underscoring the need for systematic linguistic documentation. A detailed study of Kichonyi noun morphology is therefore essential for preserving linguistic diversity, safeguarding the language against the pressures of globalization, and ensuring the availability of reliable linguistic data for future research.

This study focused specifically on the morphological structure of nouns in Kichonyi. Morphology, defined by Rahayu (2021) as the branch of grammar concerned with the structure of words and the morphemes that constitute them, is central to understanding how linguistic rules operate in both language perception and production, as well as how linguistic knowledge is represented cognitively. Major phonological processes in Kichonyi have been explored by a study by Mbaga (2020). It addressed aspects of Kichonyi's phonology but not specifically on the processes involved in the formation of nouns, making it not fully understood. Research on its nominal morphology remains scarce therefore a systematic investigation of Kichonyi nouns is necessary to illuminate the morphemic structures that underlie noun formation in the language.

As Mogel and Comrie (2011) observe, word classes reflect the lexicalization of various sentential functions, with nouns encoding referents such as persons, objects, and entities. As a universal grammatical category, nouns form an essential part of linguistic structure across languages. Their analysis is thus fundamental not only for describing the grammar of a particular language but also for understanding cross-linguistic patterns in lexical and syntactic organization.

The significance of morphological study extends beyond descriptive linguistics. Schleicher (1861) argued that morphological patterns reflect the evolutionary trajectories of languages, revealing processes of growth, change, and attrition. Contemporary scholarship likewise emphasizes morphology's role in illuminating the nature of linguistic rules and the internal organization of the human language faculty (Rahayu 2021). Through the examination of word-formation processes and patterns of morphological alternation, researchers gain insight into the interplay between morphology, syntax, and semantics, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed within a linguistic system.

In light of these considerations, the present study seeks to provide a detailed account of the morphological structure of Kichonyi nouns, addressing gaps left by previous research and contributing to the broader documentation and preservation of the language.

Studying morphology is very vital because it acts as a window into language evolution. Schleicher (1861) believed that morphological analysis could reveal the evolutionary stages of languages and proposed that languages undergo processes of growth, change, and decay.

The study of morphology is also used to gain a better grasp of the nature of linguistic rules and the internal organization of natural language grammar (Rahayu 2021:4). As a result, we may learn more about the architecture of human language faculty as well as the nature of rule-governed innovation in the domain of language.

Analyzing the morphology of nouns reveals linguistic patterns that help linguists understand word formation and modification which sheds light on the deeper aspects of a language's structure, including its syntax and semantics hence offering a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of meaning.

That is why this study sought to describe the morphology of Kichonyi with the aim of filling the gaps that were left out by the existing studies.

Statement of the Problem

The morphological structure of nouns in Kichonyi, a language spoken by the Mijikenda community along the Kenyan coast, remains under-explored, with existing linguistic studies predominantly focusing on phonological

aspects. This dearth of research has resulted in significant gaps in understanding the formation and functioning of Kichonyi nouns within the language system. Given the pivotal role nouns play in the grammar of many languages, a thorough comprehension of their morphological structures is essential for advancing linguistic analysis and deepening our understanding of Kichonyi. Consequently, a systematic and comprehensive morphological description of Kichonyi nouns is imperative to fill these gaps and provide a foundational understanding of the language's grammatical structure.

Research Objectives

The investigation was guided by the following objectives.

To identify and describe the different types of Kichonyi nouns.

To examine the phonological triggers of the formations of nouns in Kichonyi.

To establish the morpho-phonological processes existing in the formation of Kichonyi nouns.

Key Research Questions

The following are the research questions that the study set out to answer.

1. What are the different types of nouns in Kichonyi, and how are they categorized based on their semantic roles and morphological structures?

2. What are the phonological triggers that lead to the formation of nouns in Kichonyi?

3. Which morpho-phonological processes are involved in the formation of nouns in Kichonyi?

Significance of the Study

Morphology plays a significant role in language studies (Arslan, Muhammad, Soaib & Idrees 2023). It provides a foundation for the exploration of linguistics on advanced levels such as syntax and semantics. Undertaking a detailed morphological description of Kichonyi nouns may significantly enhance linguistic knowledge, especially within the study of Bantu languages. By providing a comprehensive analysis of how nouns in Kichonyi are structured and used, this research may fill existing gaps in the documentation of this language which has so far been underrepresented in linguistic studies. The findings may offer valuable data for linguists and anthropologists interested in Bantu morphology and African linguistics, enriching the understanding of noun formation, class systems, and language topology. This research can also serve as a comparative resource for scholars working on related languages, deepening their understanding of the morphological diversity within the Mijikenda language family.

The findings of this study may also have important practical applications, particularly in language documentation and educational development. A systematic description of Kichonyi nouns could serve as the foundation for creating language learning materials, enhancing literacy programs, and supporting educational initiatives in the community. This research could be a critical step in helping to preserve the Kichonyi linguistic data for future generations. By contributing to a growing body of linguistic resources, the study would play a vital role in safeguarding the linguistic heritage of Kichonyi.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was on the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns and was focused on both spoken and written Kichonyi. A morphological study of Kichonyi language covered an exceptionally large area in the sense that it included an analysis of the internal structures of nouns. The research specifically applied the principles of descriptive orientation and grammatical categories of the Basic Linguistic Theory to establish how the various types of nouns in Kichonyi are formed. The study did not only focus on the morphological description of

nouns in Kichonyi, but also the phonological aspect of language that was relevant to the study. The study concentrated only in analyzing Kichonyi nouns, the morpho-phonological processes involved in the noun formation due to its time limit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter sets out to discuss the various sources reviewed. This section organizes the literature review under the following subtopics: empirical and theoretical literature.

Empirical Literature

This sub-chapter focuses on literature review on types of nouns, literature review on what triggers the distribution of singular and plural noun markers and the literature review on the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns.

Literature Review on Types of Nouns

In her study Akeng'o (2021) looked at the semantic analysis of Lunyore nouns using the Componential Analysis (CA) theory. She identified the different noun classes of Lunyore, then evaluated how morphological information influence class allocating of the nouns and examining the efficacy of Componential Analysis of Lunyore nouns. The data revealed that Lunyore has nineteen noun classes which rely heavily on its morphology and that in a sentence other syntactic element must grammatically agree with the noun subject. This study by Akeng'o (2021) is relevant to the current study as it provides insight on the identification of different noun classes. However, it is different from the current one, while Akeng'o (2021) looked at the semantic analysis of Lunyore nouns using the Componential Analysis ours looks at the description of nouns in Kichonyi using the Basic Linguistic Theory.

In addition, Atoh (2001) explored the Semantic properties of Dholuo nouns to determine whether their relationships within sentences are influenced by these distinctive properties using the Semantic field theory by Lehre (1974) . Atoh (2001) concluded that Dholuo nouns fall within domains in which they share semantic space. They fall into these fields on account of family resemblances and common componential features. This study by Atoh (2001) informs the current study on the analysis of nouns classes. However, the study is different from the current study, while Atoh did the analysis of Dholuo nouns using the semantic field theory; ours seeks to analyze the morphological description of nouns in Kichonyi using the Basic Linguistic Theory.

Using Aronoff's word formation theory, Munyaya (2021) did a study on noun derivation in Kigiriama. The study investigates noun derivations within the framework of Aronoffs (1976) Word formation in Generative Grammar and the Extended Level Ordering. The study concluded that affixation processes in Kigiryama can to a large extent be accounted for within the Word Formation Generative Grammar Theory while compounding can be accounted for within the extended Level Ordering Hypothesis, and contrary to predictions of Aronoff's that word formation Rules operate solely over words this is not the case in Kigiryama that they can operate over morphemes and groups of words like phrases. The study by Munyaya (2021) is similar to the current study since they both analyze the description and formation of nouns; however, the study is different from the current in aspects of methodology and the theory applied.

Mweshi (2018) did a study on the morphological analysis of Bisa nouns; a dialect of the Bemba language in Mpika district, Zambia, using the Lexeme-Morpheme Base Morphology developed by Beard (1995). The focus of the study was, to identify and describe the noun class system in the Bisa dialect, to describe the word formation processes evident in the formation of nouns and to determine the productivity of different word formation processes in the formation of nouns in Bisa dialect. The findings showed that Bisa has nineteen different noun classes out of which sixteen are basic while three are locatives. The study is like the current study as they both focus on identifying and describing the types of nouns. However, as Mweshi (2018) studies the Bisa language using the Lexeme-Morpheme Base Morphology Theory, ours studies the morphological description of nouns in

Kichonyi using the BLT.

Literature Review on what Triggers the Distribution of Singular and Plural Markers

Midigo & Wambua (2024) did a study on the morphological analysis of Dholuo number markers using the Morphological Theory by Chomsky (1970). The study examined plural morphemes in Dholuo nouns by investigating number markers. The findings show that plural morphemes in Dholuo nouns are irregular and number markers majorly forming plural morphemes are suffixes [-e], [-i] and [-ni]. The study gives insight on the distribution of singular and plural noun markers. However, the study by (Midigo & Wambua (2024) is different from ours, while they looked at the morphological analysis of Dholuo number markers, ours looks at the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns using the BLT.

In a discussion on the morphophonological number marking in Luo, a western Nilotic language spoken in Kinya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan and Ethiopia, Waryoba (2025) focused on the impact of both morphological and phonological markers of number inflection. The findings describe suffixation as a dorminant number marking process. This study provides a good foundation on the examination of the phonological factors that triggers the singular and plural markers in Kichonyi which is the second objective of the study. This study by Waryoba (20250 differs with the current one on theoretical framework and language of study.

Arslan, Muhammad, Soaib, Idrees & Tariq (2023) did a corpus study of the morphological description of Punjabi nouns using the Theoretical Framework of Distributed Morphology proposed by Harley & Noyer (1999). It aimed at analyzing the morphological patterns of nouns in Punjabi language focusing on the inflectional and derivational processes involved in noun formation. The analysis revealed that nouns inflect for number and gender and showed same pattern of complementation among adjectives and nouns. The results also revealed various patterns for forming plural nouns in all genders and for deriving nouns from the adjectives and vice versa. This study by Arslan, Muhammad, Soaib, Idrees & Tariq 2023) is similar to the current as they both deal go ahead to look at what triggers the distribution of the singular and plural markers. However, it differs with the current study on the theory applied and the language.

Erin (2021) did a study on derivation in Izere, a central plateau language of the Benue-Congo language family with the aid of morph-lexical rules proposed by Lieber (1980), which relates derived word forms within a lexical category to their base forms with the aid of word formation rules. The study descriptively accounted for the morphological derivation of nouns from adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and other nouns in Izere language. The findings of this research indicate that prefixation is the dominant morphological process that accounts for noun derivation in Izere. This study is like the current study as they both go ahead and look at the conditions for the formation of nouns. However, it differs with ours, while the study by Erin (2023) focuses on the derivation of Izere nouns, ours describe the morphology of Kichonyi nouns using the Basic Linguistic Theory.

New, Brysbaert, Segui, Ferrand & Rastle (2024) did a study on the processing of singular and plural nouns in French and English based on lexical decision times. The study found that in English and French, just like in Dutch, Lexical decision times, to singular nouns are influenced by the frequencies of the plural forms. This study is like the current study as they both deal with the distribution of singular and plural nouns. However, the study by New, Brysbaert, Segui, Ferrand & Rastle (2024) is different from the current study on language and theory used.

Literature Review on the Morpho-phonological Processes involved in Noun Formation

Ipu (1982) studies the sounds of lower Kipokomo. She investigates the consonant and Vowel sounds of the lower Kipfokomo. He goes to describe the processes that both the vowles and consonants undergo and formulate their rules. The current study has a lot to learn from Ipu's work because; in as much as Kipfokomo is not part of the Mijikenda languages, they have some similarities and sometimes even share some uterrrances with lower Kipfokomo being a Bantu language.

Mbwika (2018) analysed the phonological adaptation processes of Rabai loanwords from English and Kiswahili

languages. Although he used Optimality theory while we used BLT, our study has a lot to learn from her study given that Chonyi and Rabai are not only Bantu languages but also part of the Mijikenda tribes and are mutually intelligible for the better part.

Using NGP, Bakari (1982) studied the Morphophonology of the Kenyan Swahili Dialects. Our study will borrow a leaf from this study as Kichonyi also borrow a lot from English and Kiswahili. In his study Bakari investigates the consonantal systems of the different Kenyan Swahili dialects and goes to describe the phonological processes they undergo and formulate their rules and these are some of the objectives of the study.

Mbaga (2020) did a study of the morpho-phonological processes of Kichonyi using the Natural Generative Phonology. The study further analyzed the conditions under which the processes take place. This study gives focus to the current study in the analysis of the morpho-phonological processes involved as they both are centered on the same language. However, this study differs, as Mbaga (2020) majors on the phonology of Kichonyi using the NGP theory, the current study analyses the morphology of Kichonyi using the BLT framework.

Ngowa (2015) studied the Kigiryama loan Nouns from English using Hopper's (1976) Generative Phonology Theory. In her study, she discusses vowel assimilation, vowel deletion, consonant assimilation, and vowel insertion. In addition, she found that phonological processes make it possible to borrow words from English to Kigiryama; more so, vowel insertion stood out as the most relevant phonological process in borrowing words from English. The study is relevant to the current as it gives insight on the morpho- phonological processes involved in the formation of Nouns. However, it is different from the current study because, while Ngowa (2015) looks at Kigiryama nouns using Generative Phonology, ours looks at Kichonyi nouns using BLT.

Mukanda (2022) did a Morpho-phonological Analysis of Luwanga nouns and verbs within the framework of Lexical Phonology. This study explained the relationship between morphology and phonology, in the structure of Luwanga Lexicon. The study established that the morphological rules of inflection and derivation are used in tandem with the phonological processes such as glide formation, vowel coalescence and nasalization. The studies are similar as they both focus on the morpho-phonological processes involved. However, the study by Mukanda (2022) is different from the current study. While the study by Mukanda (2022) focuses on the morpho-phonology of Luwanga nouns and verbs, the current study looks at the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns using the BLT.

Anjiji (2008) did a study a morphological description on noun derivation in Lutiriki using the Natural Generative Phonology and Morphological Doubling Theory. The study focused on the morphological and phonological conditions involved in the derivation of nouns in Lutiriki and provides insightful analysis of the derivational processes. This study by Anjiji (2008) is vital as it provides a background on the sounds of Lutiriki and phonological processes which form part of our study. However, it differs with the current study, while it describes the morphology of Lutiriki using NGP and Morphological Doubling Theory; ours describe the morphology of nouns in Kichonyi using the Basic Linguistic Theory. Boen (2014) did a study on the morphological and phonological adaptation of loan words of Nandi Language that are borrowed from English and Kiswahili using the Natural Generative Phonology and Generative CV phonology. The study focused on t he phonological and morphological adaptation processes and analysis of the syllable structure on borrowed words. Our study has a lot to learn from this study as far the morpho- phonological processes are concerned. However, the study by Boen (2014) differs with the current study, while it focuses on the morphology and phonology of Nandi's borrowed words using NGP, the current study focuses on the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns using the BLT.

Bodomo & Marfo (2007) did a study on the morph phonology of noun classes in Dagaare and Akan using the Semantic Criteria Approach. The study focused on putting Dagaare and Akan nouns in broad classes. And this broad classification can be fine-tuned and categorized into sub-classes based on phonological processes such as vowel harmony and assimilation while semantic and other non- morpho-phonological factors maybe attested in the class systems, it is argued that a comprehensive noun classification in both languages with these systems

could hardly be evolved without recourse to morphophonology. The study is important to the current study as gives insights to the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns. However, while the study by Bodomo & Marfo (2007) concentrates on the Dagaare and Akan language using the semantic criteria approach, ours focuses on the description of the morphology of Kichonyi using BLT.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Ansah (2021) did a study on the grammatical description of the morphology of Leteh, a South-Guan language from the Niger-Congo family of Languages using the Basic Linguistic Theory. The study focused on description of Leteh nominal morphology in context of two phenomena: number marking and noun classification. The study found that the language is prefixal; the only suffix occurring with nouns is that which marks plural kinship and social relation. There is also indication of the loss of nominal prefixes. This study gives the current study a foundation on the employment of Basic Linguistic Theory in describing number markings and noun categories in Kichonyi as both Lete and Kichonyi are Bantu languages. However, the study by Ansah (2021) differs with the current study as our study goes further to look at the morphophonology of nouns in Kichonyi.

Gewta (2022) did a study of the verbal extension and valence in Gumer variety of Gurage language found in Ethiopia. The study aimed at uncovering the interaction between verbal extension and valence in Gumer an Ethiosemitic language. It grouped Gumer verbs based on the root patterns and morph syntactic properties. The study is different from the current study as it focuses on the verbal extension and valence in Gumer variety of Gurage while the current study looks at the description of the morphology of Kichonyi nouns.

Ousmanou (2014) did a study on how to disclose the environment through linguistic description. The study found out that, on a par with what occurs in any language, the lexicon of Koshin, a southern Bantoid language of Cameroon and the basic grammatical categories both mirror the environment of the community. This study will give insights to the current study on the exploration of the Basic Linguistic framework. However, this study differs with the current study, while looks at the Basic Linguistic Analysis of Koshin, ours looks at the morphological description of nouns in Kichonyi. Seyoum (2021) did a study on the phonology of Dizi, an Omotic language spoken in southwest Ethiopia and the study focused on describing and documenting the phonology of Dizi language which examined consonant and vowel phonemes, the tone system, syllable structure of language and co-occurrence of the consonant. The study found that central Dizi has 30 consonant phonemes and five vowels, and all the five vowels have their language counterparts. It also found out that the language has lexical and grammatical tone with low and high tone contrast. Finally, the study revealed that there is consonant germination at the word medial position. The study is relevant to the current study as it focuses on describing language using the Basic Linguistic theory; however, this study by Seyoum (2021) differs with the current study as it focuses on the phonology of Dizi language while ours looks at the morphology of Kichonyi nouns.

Teng (2008) did a reference grammar of Puyuma an Austronesian language of Taiwan. The study investigated the Nanwang dialect of the Puyuma language, spoken by people of Nanwang and Paoshang suburbs of Taitung city in Southern Taiwan. In this study, the Basic Linguistic Theory emphasized the need to describe each language in its concepts derived from other language. The study aimed at describing the phonology and morph syntax of Puyuma. The study by Teng (2008) differs with the current study as it aimed at investigating the grammar of Puyuma while the current study explores the morphology of Kichonyi nouns.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted the Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) which was proposed for description by Dixon (2010) and describes what happens in the language under study and relates this to cross-linguistic typological generalizations and parameters on the human languages and tries to find why languages are the way they are. As Dixon (2012) put it; "*each language is a partial means of expression, being able to directly convey only a portion of possible meaning contrasts (that is, only a portion of the sum meaning contrasts added up over all known languages).”*

The Basic Linguistic Theory is a broad, empirical framework designed for the systematic description and analysis of linguistic structures. It is a cumulative framework that has slowly developed over the past century and linguists see it as a better way of describing languages. Each description gives an avenue to a revision of the theory *"making it fully the essential nature of Language as a cultural trait of human beings (Dixon 2010)."* The following are the Basic principles of the Basic Linguistic Theory.

Descriptive Orientation

BLT focuses on how languages are structured, prioritizing the precise, consistent, and impartial descriptions of linguistic data. Rather than imposing predefined theoretical models, it emphasizes a data-driven approach. This involves eliciting data from native speakers of a language and carefully analyzing nouns. This principle was useful in identifying nouns with their class prefixes and often associated these nouns with their semanticdomains. For example, the prefix [mu-] is associated with class one nouns that refer to human beings.

Cross-Linguistic Comparability

BLT facilitates cross-linguistic analysis by identifying universal grammatical categories like nouns and verbs, while also allowing for the specific ways these categories manifest in individual languages. This balance between universality and specificity enables typological comparison. In Kichonyi, the noun class system was described in terms consistent with broader Bantu typology. As shown in this study, the principle enabled the comparability of Kichonyi and other language. Classes were documented along with their associated morphological markers and agreement patterns.

Grammatical Categories and Structures

Within Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT), a key objective is the identification and analysis of grammatical categories such as noun class, number, and gender along with how these categories are marked morphologically. Using BLT's tools, grammatical rules were developed based on corpus of data collected through fieldwork. A central emphasis of BLT is on the analysis of morphological structure and understanding how words are constructed from morphemes (the smallest meaningful units). This approach includes formulating hypothesis about number marking in nouns.

Form-Function Correlation

A foundational principle of BLT is the consistent mapping of morphological forms to their corresponding functions, whether grammatical or semantic. This ensures that linguistic analysis captures how meaning is systematically encoded within a language's structure.

Langendoen (1967) points out on Dixon argument that the relationship between signifier and signified is correlative rather than determinative and that an important dimension in meaning is that of value in a system. In other words, the principle was useful in this study as it analyzed nouns functionally.

Topological Awareness

BLT embraces topological diversity by identifying cross-linguistic patterns, which is particularly valuable when documenting under-studied languages such as Kichonyi. The focus of the principle was on systematic analysis and comparison of derivational patterns. Langendoen (1967: 742-750) states, Dixon's approach is simply to find out how language is used and its relation to other phenomena. He observes that BLT has embraced analogist and anomalist controversy as a more sophisticated version of old naturalist and conventionalist controversy. The rules of the analogist were designed to determine membership in paradigm classes of words. The anomalist attack on the analogists' rule was more of an attack on a particular and ineffective methodology than on the view that language is rule-governed behavior.

Despite the theory having all these principles, the study mainly concentrated on the principle of descriptive

orientation and grammatical categories. Using these principles, BLT proved to be a well-suited framework for this study. Like its Bantu relatives, Kichonyi exhibits an elaborate noun class system, extensive use of affixation and intricate agreement mechanisms. BLT was capable of accurately describing these features without imposing distortive theoretical assumptions.

BLT also promoted transparency in morpheme segmentation, supporting detailed, morpheme-by-morpheme analysis, which is essential for accurately describing noun structure in a language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This subsection provides information on the research design, a brief description of the study location, the population, how data will be collected and analyzed.

Research Design

The study was conducted using the descriptive research design. According to Shinija (2024), descriptive research is a research method used to try and determine the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. In addition, a descriptive research design requires the researcher to be a native speaker of the language under study (Milroy 1987).

Descriptive research design was appropriate for this study because it allowed for a systematic exploration of the Kichonyi nouns, their distribution and the morpho-phonological processes guiding their formation. Descriptive research was ideal for these objectives as it prioritizes detailed documentation of these existing phenomena.

Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Dzitsoni, Chasimba and Mwarakaya because these areas have different geographical and demographic significance. These areas are situated within regions where Kichonyi is spoken and focusing in these areas allows the researcher to access communities where the language is actively used, increasing the likelihood of obtaining authentic linguistic data.

Population of Study

Kochari (2007) observes that a population is the total collection of elements about which a researcher makes inferences. The study included both educated and non-educated language experts. Educated language experts involved were 40 and above of age, those who can read and write so that they can be able to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Non-educated language experts were used in this study as they would provide authentic data through focus group discussions. Informants in this age (40 and above) have good knowledge of their native language, have full linguistic capacity of their language, and can give data that is reliable and desired by the researcher.

Sampling Techniques and Procedures

Samples are relied upon to represent larger populations since it is not possible to study an entire population (Johnson 2008). In this study, various sampling techniques were employed to gather a representative sample of the linguistic data. These techniques were designed to ensure that the research is both accurate and reliable.

The study used Purposive sampling which is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant posseses (Tongco 2007). This method was used to select participants from Dzitsoni, Chasimba and Mwarakaya villages because it ensured that the participants selected are fluent and majority of speakers reside in these areas. This was essential for collecting accurate and reliable types of nouns. The study targeted speakers within specific criteria (native speakers from Dzitsoni, Mwarakaya and Chasimba, with the required information regarding the objectives of the study).

The study also used snowballing, which is a technique whereby one key respondent is identified and asked to name others who would likely be candidates for the research (Denscombe 2017). Snowballing is an effective way to acquire an in-depth sampling frame. The area chief was used as the key respondent who provided referrals to recruit the language consultants required for this research. Two participants were selected from each of the three villages, resulting in a representative sample of six. Since this is a linguistic study, the number of participants is less critical, as even a single individual can provide relevant data.

Data Collection Procedure

The material for study was nouns. Data collection also involved gathering rich, detailed data through various methods. This stage required building rapport and trust with participants to elicit genuine and meaningful responses. These nouns were collected through,

Interviews

According to Taherdoost (2022), interview is a method of asking questions to gain both qualitative and quantitative data. Research questions were formulated where open-ended questions that were broad and explanatory, aimed at understanding the how and why of a phenomenon. Interviews provided an opportunity to collect detailed and nuanced information about Kichonyi noun morphology, including prefixes, suffixes, noun classes, singular/ plural forms, and derivational processes. Two interview sessions were conducted where different word formation processes were identified from the data that was given by the respondents. This procedure included the educated informants. The main advantage of interview method was that participants expressed their point of view in private, freely, and without being limited to the specified frameworks.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire as described by Srejeesh (2014) is fundamentally a structured series of questions presented to respondents during an interview, accompanied clear instructions detailing the sequence and selection criteria. This tool holds significant versality across various research domains, encompassing survey research and experimental design, providing researchers with a structured framework to gather insights systematically for data collection and analysis. Questions, that elicitated words and phrases on nouns were asked on the questionnaires. The researcher then secured answers which contained data on types of nouns like abstract, agent nouns and inanimate objects (more examples are given in chapter four)

Focus Group Discussions

Krueger (1998) defines Focus Group Discussion as a way of gathering information from people of similar background and experiences to discuss specific topic of interest. The researcher used Focus Group Discussion to get in depth information on the participants understanding of the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns. According to Kochari (2008) the FGD process involves a facilitator and a group of about 8-12 people who have the same background. Guided by a facilitator, the discussions explored specific topics on nouns. There were three sessions of the FGD and throughout these discussions; Kichonyi Bible was also read to obtain data on Kichonyi nouns. Different morpho- phonological processes like labialization were identified. This method helped in collecting qualitative data based on the opinions of the people that participated in the study.

Data Analysis

The steps for data analysis were as follow:

Step 1. Data Collection and Preparation

The first step involved collecting Kichonyi nouns through primary data collection method such as interviews with native speakers, questionaires and focus group discussion. It also involved collecting secondary data from texts and Kichonyi bible. The nouns collected were transcribed and translated. Next was to identify and describe

noun classes and number (singular/ plural).

Step 2. Generating Hypothesis about the Noun Number Marker

This step involved identifying the root morphemes and affixes (prefixes, suffixes) that make up the nouns. For example, in Bantu languages, noun classes are often marked by prefixes, so segmenting them is crucial. It also involved analyzing how prefixes or suffixes are used to denote number (singular/ plural), diminutives, gigantic nouns, or other grammatical categories. The researcher further looked for patterns on how nouns are categorized.

Step 3. Examining the Phonological Factors that triggers distribution of singular and Plural Markers

This step involved exploring the phonological influences in detail, illustrating how they shape the distribution and realization of singular and plural noun markers in Kichonyi. **Step 4. Establishing the Morpho-Phonological Processes Involved.**

This step involved analyzing the morphological rules and the phonological changes that occur when morphemes combine. For instance, does the noun prefix change based on the first consonant or vowel of the root word? These changes can reveal important rules of the noun morphology in Kichonyi and give an understanding of the semantic relationships by investigating how different morphological forms change the meaning of nouns e.g., pluralization or possessive forms.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents were put through a consent form by the researcher.

The proposal was submitted to the Pwani University Ethics and Review Committee for review. To ensure confidentiality during data collection, the researcher reassured the respondents that the information given would be for academic purposes only and names would be anonymous.

Data Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation

Introduction

This chapter explores the morphological structure of nouns in Kichonyi. A morphological structure entails the breakdown of the lexical item to realize its components and how they are brought together (Akoth 2014). Kichonyi being a highly inflectional language, its nouns not only communicate meaning of word but also have morphemes that reveal the class of noun and number in terms of singularity or plurality. The prefix of the noun determines the class into which the noun falls.

The study starts with the classification and description of Kichonyi nouns. It then examines the phonological factors influencing singular and plural noun marker distribution. Finally, the study analyzes the morpho-phonological processes involved in noun formation.

Identification and Description of Kichonyi Nouns

In this objective, descriptive orientation, a principle of the Basic Linguistic Theory was used to identify and describe the different types of nouns in Kichonyi. A noun as defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is a word that refers to a person place or a thing, a quality, or an activity. Identification and description of nouns is especially important as it helps in understanding the internal structures of nouns and their respective classes in different languages. Demuth (2000) notes that Bantu noun classes are recognized as grammatical morphemes rather that independent lexical items. The study has established that in Kichonyi just like in other Bantu language, noun classes are a core feature, assigning nouns to categories marked by prefixes, controlling agreement across words. The classes often numbered, define semantic groups like classes 1 and 2 for humans, 3/4 for plants and objects. The table 1 below shows the noun classes in the Kichonyi language.

Table 1: Noun Classes in Kichonyi

Class	Word that denotes	Singular/ Plural Morpheme
1/2	humans	mu/a
3/4	plants and objects	mu/mi
5/6	body parts and plants	dzi/ma
7/8	inanimate objects	chi/vi
9/10	zero morpheme nouns	~~Ø~~/~~Ø~~
11/12	instruments	lu/nyu
13/8a	diminutive	ka/vi
14	abstract nouns	U
15	infinitives	Ku
16/17/18	locatives	ha/ku/mu
19/4a	gigantic nouns	ri/mi

Source: Welmers' (1973) proto-Bantu noun Classification

Notice in table one above that each of the classes is assigned their respective prefixes and their semantic roles.

The study revealed the following types of nouns in the Kichonyi language.

Nouns Referring to Humans

The study has found that there are nouns that refer to humans which primarily belong to classes 1 and 2 of Kichonyi nouns. In the Kichonyi language, we observed two types of nouns that refer to humans and these are agent nouns and patient nouns.

Agent Nouns

These are the most common types of nouns that refer to humans. According to Saeed (2009:149) an agent is defined as an initiator of action, capable of acting with intentions. Check example 1 in table 2 below.

Table 2 *:* **Nouns that Denote Agents**

Verb Root	Derived Singular Agent Noun	Derived Plural Agent Noun
a)-*gul-a* (buy)	*mu-gul-i (*a buyer)	*a-gul-i* (buyers)
b) -tsol-a (pick)	*mu-tsol-i* (a picker)	*a-tsol-i* (pickers)
c) -lagul-a (heal)	*mu-lagul-i (*a healer)	*a-lagul-i* (healers)
d) -hek-a (fetch)	*mu-hek-i (*a fetcher)	*a-hek-i* (fetchers)
f) –som-a (learn)	*mu-som-i* (a learner)	*a-som-i* (learners)
g)- keng-a (lie)	*mu-keng-i* (a liar)	*a-keng-i* (liars)
h) -jit-a (cook)	*mu-jit-i* (a cook)	*a-jit-i* (cooks)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 2 above that, agent nouns are formed from verbs and all the verb roots that agent nouns are formed from begin with a consonant. In the formation of agent nouns in Kichonyi, the verb roots take the prefix [mu-] for singular and [a-] for plural. Additionally, they replace the final low front vowel /a/ with the high front vowel/i/.

It is important to note that there are agent nouns derived from verb roots that begin with vowels that are formed differently. Example 2 in table 3 depicts this.

Table 3: Agent Nouns Formed by Adding [mw-]

Verb Root	Derived Singular Noun	Derived Plural Noun
a) -ahul-a (cut)	mw-ahul-i (a person who cuts)	a-hul-i (people who cut)
b) -afun-a (bite)	mw-afun-i (a person who bites)	a-fun-i (people who bite)
c) -at-a (to skin)	mw-at-i (a person who skins)	a-t-i (people who skins)
d) –ar-a (advise)	mw-ar-i (an advisor)	a-r-i (advisors)
e) –andik-a (write)	mw-andik-i (a writer)	a-ndik-i (writers)
f) -awiz-a (help)	mw-awiz-i (a helper)	a-wiz-i (helpers)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 3 above that, most of the verb roots from which these agent nouns are formed, begin with vowels, therefore when forming agent nouns from these respective roots, the high-back vowel /u/ in the prefix [mu-] changes to velar glide /w/. We should further notice that the last vowel in the verb root (low front vowel) /a/ is replaced with a high front vowel /i/. There are other agent nouns derived from verbs in Kichonyi that have a different combination with the root. Example 3 in table 4 below illustrates this.

Table 4 : Nouns Derived from Verbs with a Different Combination with the Root

Verb root	Derived singular Noun	Derived plural Noun
-rind-a (guard)	mu-rinz-i (a guard)	a-rinz-i (guards)
-hond-a (pound)	mu-honz-i (a pounder)	a-honz-i (pounders)
-zing-a (be immoral)	mu-zinz-i (an immoral person)	a-zinz-i (immoral people)
-tung-a (compose)	mu-tunz-i (a composer)	a-tunz-i (composers)
-hend-a (do)	mu-henz-i (a worker)	a-henz-i (workers)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 4 above that, there are agent nouns formed from verb roots that end with the alveolar stop /d/ and velar stop /g/ that change to the alveolar fricative /z/ when they occur before the high front vowel /i/.

Patient Nouns

Apart from agent nouns, there is also evidence of patient nouns in the Kichonyi language. According to Crystal (1997:281), linguists use the term “patient” in grammatical analysis to describe an entity affected by the action of a verb. These nouns are also referred to as undergoers. There are nouns in Kichonyi, that refer to people who have been acted upon, known as patient nouns which are derived from other nouns. Check the data in example 4 in table 5 below.

Table 5 : Patient Nouns Formed from Agent Nouns

Doer Noun		Suffix	Derived Singular Noun
a) mu-big-i (a person who beats)	-wa	mu-big-wa (a person beaten)	
b) mu-hirik-i (a person who sends off)	-wa	mu-hirik-wa (a person sent off)	
c) mu-hal-i (a married who marries)	-wa	mu-hal-wa (a person married)	
d) mu-guz-i (a person who sells)	-wa	mu-guz-wa (a person sold)	
e) mu-rih-i (a person who pays)	-wa	mu-rih-wa (a person paid)	
f) mu-gut-i (a person who touches)	-wa	mu-gut-wa (a person touched)	

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the table 5 above that, patient nouns in Kichonyi are formed by retaining the prefixes [mu-] and [a-] which indicate agent. Furthermore, the final vowel of the agent noun /i/ changes to a suffix [-*wa*] which sometimes is also referred to as the passive. These nouns also belong to classes one and two just like agent nouns.

Nouns Referring to Styles, Things and Names of Fruit Trees

These nouns denote the change of the characteristic of a subject from one state to another. Change of state verbs are also known as stative verbs. English examples of nouns formed from these verbs are resistance, appearance, involvement, information etc. As we observe in the Kichonyi language, it is clearly shown that nouns derived from change of state verbs are formed by attaching the [mu-] / [mi-] prefixes to the verb root as shown below in example 5 in Table 6.

Table 6 : Nouns Formed from Verbs which Denote Styles, Designs and Things

Verb root	Derived Singular Noun	Derived Plural Noun
-song-a (plait)	*mu-song-o* (plaiting style)	*mi-song-o* (plaiting styles)
-has-a (heal)	*mu-has-o* (healing medicine)	*mi-has-o* (healing medicines)
-gwarur-a (scratch)	*mu-gwarur-o* (a scratch)	*mi-gwarur-o* (scratches)
-shon-a (sew)	*mu-shon-o* (a design)	*mi-shon-o* (designs)
-nyol-a (shave)	*mu-nyol-o* (a shaving style)	*mi-nyol-o* (shaving styles)
-dobez-a (ripen)	*mu-dobez-o* (a ripe maize)	*mi-dobez-o (*ripe maize)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above examples that, to form nouns from verbs and which denote styles, designs, and things in Kichonyi, the morpheme [mu-] is added to the verb root for singular nouns. To form their corresponding plurals, the prefix [mu-] is replaced with [mi-]. Further notice that, the final low front vowel /a/ in the verb root is replaced with the mid-back vowel /o/. These nouns belong to classes 3 and 4 referring to nouns formed from change of state verbs.

Names of fruit trees are also formed from other nouns in Kichonyi. The root noun is normally a name of a fruit. Observe the data given in example 6 in table 7 below.

Table 7: Nouns Formed from Names of Fruit Trees

Noun root	Derived Singular Noun	Derived Plural Noun
a) –chungw-a (orange)	mu-chungw-a (orange tree)	mi-chungw-a (orange trees)
b) –chenz-a (tangerine)	mu-chenz-a (tangerine tree)	mi-chenz-a (tangerine trees)
c) –naz-i (coconut fruit)	mu-naz-i (coconut tree)	mi-naz-i (coconut trees)
d) –papay-u (pawpaw)	mu-papay-u (pawpaw tree)	mi-papay-u (pawpaw trees)
e) –kanj-u (cashew apple)	mu-kanj-u (cashew nut tree)	mi-kanj-u (cashew nut trees)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 7 that names of fruit trees are formed from the names of their respective fruit and they take [mu-] for singular and [mi-] for plural. They fall under the 3/4 classes of nouns.

Nouns Referring to Body Parts, Plants and Objects

In many Bantu languages including Kichonyi, these nouns are common. These nouns take the prefix {dzi} for singular and {ma} for plural. See the table below for examples.

Table 8 : Nouns in Kichonyi referring to body parts, plants and objects

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
dzi-bwe (a sweet potato leaf)	ma-bwe (sweet potato leaves)
dzi-no (a tooth)	me-no (teeth)
dzi-tso (an eye)	ma-tso (eyes)
dzi-we (a stone)	ma-we (stones)
dzi-ambo (an issue)	ma-mbo (issues)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the table above that in the formation of nouns in Kichonyi that refer to body parts, plants and objects, the roots take {dzi} for singular nouns and {ma} for plurals.

These nouns belong to classes 5 and 6 of Kichonyi nouns.

Inanimate Objects

Maroz (2025) defines inanimate nouns as words that describe something that is not sentient or perceived as able to act. There are numerous examples of these nouns in the English language such as *a spade, cooker,* and *a locker*. In these English examples we see that the nouns take a suffix but not a prefix in their formation contrasting with the inanimate nouns denoting instruments in Kichonyi which are formed from verbs by attaching the prefixes chi-/vi- to the verb roots. See the illustrations given in example 8 in table 9 below.

Table 9 : Kichonyi Nouns Denoting Instruments formed by adding the prefix [chi-] / [vi-]

Verb Root	Derived Singular	Derived Plural
-fundir-a (seal)	chi-fundir-o (a seal)	vi-fundir-o (seals)
-kalang-a (fry)	chi-kalang-o (a frying pan)	vi-kalang-o (frying pans)
-nol-a (sharpen)	chi-nol-o (a sharpening stone)	v-inol-o (sharpening stones)
-ban-a (peg)	chi-ban-o (a peg)	vi-ban-o (pegs)
-funik-a (cover)	chi-funik-o (a lid)	vi-funik-o (lids)
–lung-a (spice)	chi-lungir-o (a spice)	vi-lungir-o (spices)
-gomb-a (speak)	chi-gomber-o (a microphone)	vi-gomber-o (microphones)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 9 above that, to form nouns from verbs referring to inanimate objects that denote instruments, the singular forms take the prefix [chi-] while the plural forms take the prefix [vi-]. Additionally, the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the verb root is replaced with mid back vowel /o/. These nouns belong to noun classes 7 and 8 referring to instruments.

Zero morpheme nouns

Zero morpheme nouns refer to nouns where the plural form is identical to the singular, meaning the plural marker is invisible morpheme {Ø} that adds no sound or letter, like in sheep (one sheep, many sheep) or fish contrasting with marked plurals like 'dog' to 'dog-s' to indicate the grammatical function of plurality. Similarly, we have found examples of these nouns in the Kichonyi language. See example 9 table 10 below.

Table 10 : Nouns with Zero Morphemes in Kichonyi

Singular	**NounPlural Noun**
{nyumba} (house)	{nyumba} (houses)
{meza} (table)	{meza} (tables)
{ndere) (tapping can)	{ndere) (tapping cans)
{pingi} (mouse)	{pingi} (mice)
{mbuzi} (goat)	{mbuzi} (goats)
{njira} (road)	{njira} (roads)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the table above that these nouns do not take any prefix both in the singular and plural. Primarily, these nouns belong to classes 9 and 10 of Kichonyi nouns.

Nouns denoting instruments

There are also other nouns in Kichonyi which refer to inanimate objects denoting instrument whose prefixes are [lu-]/ [nyu-]. See example 10 in table 11 below.

Table 11*:* **Kichonyi Noun Class [lu-] Instruments that are Pluralized to [nyu-]**

Derived Singular Noun	**Derived Plural Noun**
lu-gwe (a rope)	*ny-ugwe* (ropes)
lu-fu (a corpse)	*nyu-fu* (corpses)
lu-fa (a crack)	*nyu-fa* (cracks)
lu-ngo (a winnowing tray)	*ny-ungo* (winnowing trays)
lu-zi (a thread)	*ny-uzi* (threads)
lu-jere (hair*)*	*ny-ere (*hairs*)*

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data in table 11 above that, inanimate nouns that denote instruments are derived by adding the class prefix [lu-] for singular and [nyu-] for plural and categorizing them under classes 11 and 12 of nouns typically referring to inanimate objects.

There are some nouns that are derived from verbs to denote instruments with the class prefix /lu-/ that do not take the above pattern. Check the data in example 11 in table 12 below.

Table 12 : *Nouns Formed by Adding [lu-]*

Verb Root	**Derived Singular Noun**	**Derived Plural Noun**
a) -sher-a (sweep)	*lu-sher-o* (a broom)	*sher-o* (brooms)
b) -fidz-a (stir)	*lu-fidz-o* (a stirring rod)	*fidz-o* (stirring rods)
c) -bamb-a (align*)*	*lu-bamb-o (*a roasting stick*)*	*bamb-o (*roasting sticks*)*
d) -choch-a (dip)	*lu-choch-o (*a dipping thread*)*	*choch-o* (dipping threads)
e) -chig-a (to block*)*	*lu-chig-o (*a blocked area)	*chig-o (*blocked areas)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the examples in table 12 that, to form a noun that denotes an instrument from a verb root, the prefix [lu-] is added in the root to form singular nouns while in the formation of the plural forms, the verb root takes a zero morpheme. Also notice that the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the verb root, changes to the mid back vowel /o/.

Diminutives

Manova, Grestenberger & Korecky-Kroll (2023:1) described diminutives as the expressions of "smallness." This expression is not far from "a nice little something," a meaning of the diminutives we have observed from the study language. The data presented in example 12 in table 13 below illustrates this.

Table 13 : *Kichonyi Diminutives Formed from other Nouns by adding prefix [ka-] / [vi-]*

Noun root	**Derived singular**	**Derived plural**
mu-hoho (child)	*ka-hoho* (a nice little child)	*vi-hoho* (nice little children)
mu-sichana (girl)	*ka-sichana* (a nice little girl)	*vi-sichana* (little girls)
*-tupa (*bottle)	*ka-tupa* (a nice little bottle)	*vi-tupa* (nice little bottles)
mu-tumia (old person)	*ka-tumia* (nice old person)	*vi-tumia* (nice old people)
mu-kono (hand)	*ka-kono* (a nice little hand)	*vi-kono* (nice little hands)
-kuro (dog)	*ka-kuro* (a nice little dog)	*vi-kuro* (nice little dogs)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 13 above that, in Kichonyi, diminutives are formed by adding the prefix [ka-] for singular and [vi-] for plural to the noun roots. They fall in the classes 13/8a of Kichonyi nouns.

Abstract Ideas

Abstract nouns are of particular interest as they reflect the "invisible" world of qualities, actions and interrelations of various subjects abstracted from the subjects themselves (Khokhlova 2014). Myers & Simms (1989:1) adds that abstract nouns are taken from concrete terms which represent the sensuous and the particularity of things experienced or known. Abstract terms are observed to be broader and more general than

concrete and they tend to describe a domain of thought. In English there are examples such as *"freedom" or "justice*," as opposed to concrete nouns that represent tangible objects. The study has established that these nouns can also be formed from adjectives and nouns by adding various prefixes.

Abstract nouns Formed from Adjectives

Abstract nouns formed from adjectives in the Kichonyi are shown in example 13 in

Table 14 (a): Abstract Nouns Derived from Adjectives.

Adjective Root	Derived Noun	English Gloss
-dzo (beautiful) *-fuhi* (short) *-choyo* (mean) *-tune* (red) *-toro* (immoral) *-baya (*bad*)* *-kandia* (mean) *-kapindi (*old)	*u-dzo u-fuhi* *u-choyo u-tune u-toro* *u-baya u-kandia u-kapindi*	Beauty shortness meanness Redness immorality Badness Meanness Oldness

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 14 (a) above that, the adjective roots from which these abstract nouns are formed from, begin with consonants. To form an abstract noun from an adjective root in the Kichonyi language, the prefix [u-] is added to the root. These nouns belong to the class 14 which typically refer to abstract ideas.

It is essential to recognize that, adjective roots that begin with vowels form abstract nouns differently. Check example 14 in Table 14 (b) below,

Table 14 (b) : Formation of Abstract nouns in Kichonyi.

Adjective root	Abstract Noun	English gloss
a) *-eruhe* (white)	*w-eruhe*	Whiteness
b) *-eru* (black)	*w-eru*	Blackness
c) *-embamba* (thin)	*w-embamba*	Thinness
d) *-oga* (fearful)	*w-oga*	Fear
e) *-alamu* (wide)	*w-alamu*	Wideness
*f) –itsi (*foolish*)*	*w-itsi*	Foolishness
g) –uku (vulgar)	*w-uku*	Vulgarity

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data presented in table 14 (b) above that, to form abstract nouns in the Kichonyi language from adjective roots that begin with vowels, the prefix [u-] changes to the velar glide /w/.

Abstract nouns derived from nouns

These nouns that are formed from nouns are known as abstract nouns that denote resultant action. According to Crystal (1997:332), a resultant action is a term used in grammar and semantics to refer to a consequence or effect. Kichonyi contains several such terms. Consider the example 15 in table 15 below.

Table 15: Kichonyi Abstract Nouns Denoting Resultant Action

Verb (Resultant Action)	Derived Doer	NounAbstract Noun
-laul-a (inspect)	*mu-laul-i* (inspector)	*u-laul-i* (inspection)
-dzeng-a (construct)	*mu-dzeng-i* (a constructor)	*u-dzeng-i* (construction
-vyal-a (give birth)	*mu-vyaz-i* (a parent)	*u-vyaz-i* (parenting)
-heg-a (trap)	*mu-heg-i* (a person who traps)	*u-heg-i* (act of trapping)
-lagul-a (heal)	*mu-lagul-i* (a healer)	*u-lagul-i* (act of healing)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in example 15 in table 15 above that, in Kichonyi abstract nouns referring to a resultant action are formed from agent nouns by adding the prefix [u-]. They belong to class 14.

Notably, some verb roots such as *-ris-a* (graze) retain their final vowel when forming abstract nouns instead of changing to the high front vowel /i/ as shown in example 16 in table 16 below.

Table 16: Abstract Nouns Formed without Changing the Final Vowel

Verb	Derived Noun	Abstract Noun
a) *–ris-a* (graze)	*mu-ris-a* (a herdsman)	*u-ris-a* (grazing)
b) *–jem-a* (tap)	*mu-jem-a* (a tapper)	*u-jem-a* (tapping)
c) *–rim-a* (dig)	*mu-kurim-a* (a farmer)	*u-kurim-a* (farming)
d) –si-a (advise)	*mu-si-a (*an advisor)	*u-si-a (*some advice*)*
e) –gang-a (heal)	*mu-gang-a* (a healer)	*u-gang-a* (healing)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 16 above that, abstract nouns can be derived from agent nouns without changing the final high front vowel /i/ and they typically belong to class 14 of Kichonyi nouns.

Infinitives

The study has established the evidence of verbal infinitives in the Kichonyi which name activities. These nouns fall under class 15 of Kichonyi nouns. Check example 17 in table 17 below for illustrations.

Table 17: Kichonyi Infinitives functioning as Nouns

English	Kichonyi	Class
to cry	*ku-rira*	15
to walk	*kw-enda*	15
to sleep	*ku-lala*	15
to steal	*kw-eya*	15

to jump	*ku-ruka*	15

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above table that verbal infinitives are denoted by the prefix {ku}. Class 15 in Kichonyi also has exceptions in prefixes {kw}. This prefix has come about as a realization of gliding due to a constraint against vowel hiatus.

Locative nouns

These are nouns that are used to indicate the exact locations such as at, to, or in the place. They belong to classes 16, 17 and 18 of Kichonyi nouns. This is in agreement with Demuth (2000) and Bresman and Kanerva (1989) who state that locative nouns in some Bantu languages are assigned to classes 16, 17 and 18. The prefixes *ha, ku* and *mu* are used to form locatives in Kichonyi. Check example 18 in table 18 below as observed in the Kichonyi language.

Table 18: Kichonyi Locatives

English	**Kichonyi**	**Class**
my place	*ha-ngu*	16
their place	*ha-o*	16
there	*ku-ko*	17
in here	*mu-mu*	18
in there	*mu-mo*	18

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above table that each type of location uses different prefixes and demonstratives. We have observed that the locative {*ha*} is used to form a Kichonyi noun naming a specific place or a near place. The locative {*ku-*} form nouns that indicate a more general place and finally the locative prefix {*mu*} form nouns that indicate that it is inside the place to which the prefix is attached.

Gigantic nouns

Gigantic nouns are nouns that express unusual largeness: they are sometimes called argumentative as Payne (1997:110) refers to them. This expression is portrayed in nouns that are formed in Kichonyi by adding the prefixes ri-/mi- to adjectives. Example 19 in table 19 below displays this.

Table 19: Gigantic Nouns Formed from Adjectives

Adjective Root	**Derived Singular**	**Derived Plural**
-vaha (younger)	*ri-vaha* (a big younger person)	*mi-bomu* (big younger people)
-kulu (older)	*ri-kulu* (a big older person)	*mi-ziho* (big older people)
*-gumu (*hard)	*ri-gumu* (a big ugly miser)	*mi-dzo* (big ugly misers)
-hozo (idiot)	*ri-hozo* (a big idiot)	*mi-hozo* (big idiots)
-jinga (foolish)	*ri-jinga* (a big foolish person*)*	*mi-jinga* (big foolish people)
-sena (friend)	*ri-sena* (a big bad friend)	*mi-sena* (big bad friends)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data presented in table 19 above that, for you to form gigantic nouns from adjectives, you add [ri-

] to the adjective root for singular and [mi-] for plural. They belong to noun class 19 and 4a.

In Kichonyi gigantic nouns are also formed from other nouns. The expression of these nouns as we have captured from the study tend to bring more emphasis on the ugliness or badness. This is indicated in example 20 in table 20 below.

Table 20: Kichonyi Gigantic Nouns Formed from other Nouns by adding prefix ri-/mi-.

Noun Root	Derived Singular	Derived Plural
*a) mu-tu (*person)	*ri-dzi-tu* (big bad person)	*mi-dzi-tu* (big bad people)
b) chi-fyu (knife)	*ri-dzi-fyu* (big ugly knife)	*mi-dz-ifyu* (big ugly knives)
c) mb-uzi (goat)	*ri-bu-zi* (big ugly goat)	*mi-bu-zi* (big ugly goats*)*
d) mu-che (woman)	*ri-dz-iche (*big ugly woman)	*mi-dzi-che* (big ugly women)
e) ch-ulwa (frog)	*ri-dzu-lwa* (big ugly frog)	*mi-dzu-lwa* (big ugly frogs)
f) ny-umba (house)	*ri-dz-umba* (big ugly house)	*mi-dzu-mba* (big ugly house)
g) chi-hi (seat)	*ri-dzi-hi* (big ugly chair)	*mi-dzi-hi* (big ugly chair)

Source: Field data 2025

Observe in table 20 above that, forming gigantic nouns from other nouns in the Kichonyi language, involves adding the prefix [ri-] for singular forms while the noun root takes prefix [mi-] in the plural. Additionally, when forming gigantic nouns from other nouns, the initial sounds of the noun roots are replaced with the affix [dzi-] before adding the prefixes. This affix denotes 'big ugly.' They fall under class 19/4a of Kichonyi nouns.

Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are nouns formed through compounding. Compounding also known as composition is the combination of two words to form a new word (Plag 2003). Aronoff (1997) adds that compounding is the combination of lexical categories to create a larger word. Lieber & Stekaller (2014) further defined a compounding as a combinatorial word formation process that creates complex words by combining lexemes (roots or stems). Its products, which are compounds, are comprised of two or more lexemes like in the compound "cheek bone" from the English language. Fromkin, Rodman, Hultim & Logan (2001) describes compounds as new words which may be formed by stringing together other words. Whether the two nouns are noun roots or not, the most important thing is that two roots junction yields a final noun stem (Ousmanou 2014). In the most type of English compounds, the morpheme that determines the category of the entire word is called the head (O'Grady & Archibald 1997). In the English example, *bluebird;* we agree that it is a noun because its rightmost component is a noun. In Kichonyi we have evidence of two types of noun compounds which are Endocentric and exocentric compounds. Endocentric compounds have the semantic head within the compound (Plag 2003). We concur with this as it means that the head of the compound determines its meaning, with one of the constituent lexemes carrying the overall meaning. For example, the Kichonyi compound '*baba-vyala'* (father-in-law) refers to a father acquired through marriage, and it is formed from two lexemes, '*baba'* and '*vyala'* with *'baba'* serving as the head. Consequently, the meaning of this compound primarily depends on its head lexeme.

In other cases, however, we may see that the meaning of the compound noun does not follow from the meaning of its parts in the same way as in endocentric compounds. They refer to something which is not a subclass of either the constituent element, meaning they are not hyponyms of their components (Bauer 2003:42). For instance, in the Kichonyi compound noun '*vunza-rere' (*a green mamba), we find that the meaning is conveyed by the combined lexemes rather than a specific head within the compound. Noun compounds are categorized based on their formation. Two-word compounds are most common in Kichonyi, which include the following types: noun + noun, noun + verb and noun + adjective compounds.

Noun + Noun compounds

Noun + noun compounds are the most prevalent type in English. Most of these compounds are right headed, meaning the head is the rightmost element as we see in the compound 'laser printer' where 'printer' serves as

the head. Similarly, Kichonyi also features noun + noun compounds where some of these compounds undergo number inflection while others do not.

For instance, the compound *mw-an-a-mu-che* (woman) is formed by adding the noun [*mw-an-a* (person) and *mu-che* (female) where [*mw-]* is a class one singular prefix, *ana* is the first root, [*mu-]* is also a class one singular prefix and *-che* is the second root. Check example 21 in table 21 (a) below for more data.

Table 21 (a): Kichonyi Compounds referring to Humans.

Noun 1	**Noun 2**	**Singular Noun**
mw-an-a (person)	*-mu-che* (female)	*mw-an-a-mu-che (*woman) *mw-an-a-mu-lume* (man)
*mw-an-a (*person)	*-mu-lume* (male)	
c) mu-kaz-a (wife) in-law)	*-mw-an-a (*person)	*mu-kaz-a-mw-an-a* (daughter-
mw-an-a (person)	*-mu-tsang-a* (young)	*mw-an-a-mu-tsang-a* (newborn)
mw-an-a (person)	*-cham-a* (committee)	*mw-an-a-ch-am-a* (member)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in example 21 in table 21 (a) above that, noun + noun compounds that refer to humans in Kichonyi are right headed. They represent a subclass of the referents of the head lexeme, which is why they are classified as endocentric. These nouns can have both singular and plural forms. They take the prefix [mu-] for singular and [a-] for plural and are members of class one and two nouns.

Significantly, note that in noun compounds referring to offspring animals, have a different way of making plurals. Take for example, the compound *mw-an-a-ng'ombe* is formed from the nouns *mw-an-a* (young of) and *-ng'ombe (*cow) where *[mw-]* is a class one prefix, *-ana* is the first root and *-ng'ombe* is the second root of the compound noun. See other illustrations in example 22 in table 21 (b) below.

Table 21 (b): Kichonyi Compounds Referring to Offspring of Animals

Noun 1	**Noun 2**	**Singular Noun**
mw-an-a (young of)	*-ng'ombe* (cow)	*mw-a-n-a-ngombe* (calf) *mw-an-a-ng'onzi* (lamb) *mw-an-a-paka* (kitten) *mw-an-a-simba (*club) *mw-an-a-bata* (duckling)
mw-an-a (young of)	*-ng'onzi* (sheep)	
mw-an-a (young of)	*-paka* (cat)	
mw-an-a (young of)	*-simba* (lion)	
mw-an-a (young of)	*-bata* (duck)	

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data in table 21 (b) that, noun + noun compounds referring to offspring of animals are also endocentric. In forming the plurals of these compounds, the plural marker applies only to the first part of the compound noun while the second part remains unchanged. For example, the singular compound noun '*mw-an-a-paka'* becomes '*a-n-a- paka'* in the plural form. These compounds also belong to class one and two nouns as

they take prefix [mu] for singular and [a-] for plural.

There are Compound nouns referring to animals, body parts trees and vegetation and plants which are formed by adding two nouns have several ways of forming their plurals. Some of these compounds take a plural while others do not. This is illustrated in example 23 in table 22 below.

Table 22: Compound Nouns Referring to Animals, Body Parts, Plants and Vegetation

Noun 1	**Noun 2**	**Singular Noun**
a) inz'-i (a fly)	*-ch-uma (*iron)	*inz-ich-uma* (an iron fly)
b) gongol-o (millipede)	*-vi-lalu* (mad)	*gongol-o-vi-lalu* (a mad millipede)
c) banz-i (grasshopper)	*-koto (*deafness)	*banz-i-koto (*a deaf grasshopper)
*d) chi-band-a (*a hut)	*-m-eno* (teeth)	*chi-band-a-m-eno* (a cassava)
*e) chi-lamb-a (*licker*)*	*-wari (*food)	*chi-lamb-a-wari* (epiglottis)
f) mu-big-a (tree)	*-ku-lulu* (noise)	*mu-big-a-ku-lulu* (whistling thorn tree)

Source: Field data 2025

From the data in table 22 above, we find that in Kichonyi, most compounds are formed by combining two nouns. Most of these nouns have both the singular and plural forms like in example 23 (b) to 23 (f). However, some noun compounds do not follow this pattern as shown in example 23 (a) above, where the compound, '*inz-i ch-um-a'* remains the same both in singular and plural form. Additionally, noun + noun compounds in the Kichonyi language are endocentric as their meanings correspond to the head lexeme.

Noun + Verb Compounds

There are also other nouns in Kichonyi are also formed by combining a noun and a verb as shown in example 24 in table 23 below.

Table 23: Noun + Verb Compounds in Kichonyi

Word 1	**Word 2**	**Singular Noun**
a) mam-e (mother)	*-vya-la (*give birth)	*mam-e-vyala (*a mother-in-law)
b) bab-a (father)	*-vyal-a* (give birth)	*bab-a-vyala* (a father-in-law)
c) vunz-a (break)	*-pawa* (a spoon)	*vunza-pawa* (a thick porridge)
d) tund-u (hole)	*-kul-a* (eat)	*tund-u-kula* (wild fruit)
e) vunz-a (break)	*-rere* (peak)	*vun-za-rere* (green mamba)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above examples that noun + verb compounds in Kichonyi do not take a plural prefix and belong to

noun classes 9/10 referring to animals, objects, and people. Additionally, compounds referring to people such as '*bab-a-vyala'* (father-in-law) are endocentric; the referred meaning is always aligned to the head of the compound. In contrast, other compounds like '*vunz-a-rere'* (green mamba), are primarily exocentric, as their meanings do not directly respond to the head.

Noun + Adjective Compounds

In Kichonyi, compound nouns can also be formed by combining a noun and an adjective as observed in the data in example 25 in table 24 (a) below.

Table 24 (a): Kichonyi Noun + Adjective Compounds

Noun	**Adjective Root**	**Noun Compound Formed**
a) *nyu-mba* (house)	*-bomu* (big)	*nyu-mba-bomu* (main house)
b) *shati* (shirt)	*-tite* (small)	*shati-tite* (a small shirt)
c) *mu-tu* (person)	*-mu-kaha* (lazy)	*mu-tu-mu-kaha* (a lazy person)
d) *mu-che* (woman)	*-mu-dzo* (beautiful)	*mu-che-mu-dzo* (a beautiful woman)
e) *mw-an-a* (child)	*-mu-kulu* (elder)	*mw-an-a-mu-kulu* (an elder child)
f) *mu-che* (wife)	*-mu-vyere* (elder)	*mu-che-mu-vyere* (elder wife)
g) mu-che (wife)	*-mu-sha* (new)	*mu-che-mu-sha* (a new wife)
h) mo-ngo (back of)	*-lu-hande* (half)	*mo-ngo- lu-hande* (a lined snake*)*
i) kuhe (rodent)	*-ch-iza* (dark)	*kuhe-ch-iza* (mole)
j) tindi (tomato)	*-lu-kware* (feeling)	*tindi-lu-kware* (tomberry)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice that the above data in table 24 (a) above that compound nouns in the Kichonyi language can be formed by adding a noun and an adjective. These nouns have different forms. It is worth noting that those compound nouns referring to humans take the prefix [mu-]/ [a-] shown in example 26 in table 24 (b) below.

Table 24 (b): **27***Singular and Plural Forms of Noun + Adjective Compounds Referring to Humans.*

Singular Noun	**Plural Noun**
mu-che-mu-dzo (a beautiful woman)	*a-che-a-dzo* (beautiful women)
mw-ana-mu-kulu (an elder son/ daughter)	*a-na-a-kulu* (elder sons/ daughters)
mu-che-mu-vyere (an elder wife)	*a-che-a-vyere* (elder wives)
*mu-che-mu-sha (*a new wife)	*a-che-a-sha (*new wives)
mu-tu-mu-kaha (a lazy person)	*a-tu-a-kaha (*lazy people)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 24 (b) above that, compound nouns referring to people in Kichonyi, can also be formed by adding a noun and an adjective and have both the singular and plural forms. They are endocentric and belong to classes

one and two that typically refer to humans. Notably, compound nouns referring to things and animals do not have plural forms as shown in example 27 in table 24 (c) below.

Table 24 (c): Compound Nouns Referring to Things and Animals that do not take a Plural Prefix

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
nyu-mba-bomu (big house)	*nyu-mba bomu* (big houses)
shati-tite (small shirt)	*shati-tite* (small shirts)
mo-ngo-luhande (lined snake)	*mo-ngo-lu-hande* (lined snakes)
*kuhe-chiza (*mole)	*kuhe-ch-iza* (moles)
tindi-lu-kware (tomberry)	*tindi-lu-kware (*tomberries)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the examples 27 (a) to 27 (e) in table 24 (c) above that, noun + adjective compounds are also endocentric; that is the meaning in each compound is overall dependent on their head lexeme. These compounds do not take a plural prefix and are classified under class 9/10 of Kichonyi nouns typically referring to things and animals.

Borrowed Nouns

According to Mweshi (2018) borrowing is the process through which a host language adopts new words form other language together with the concepts or ideas they stand for. Rahayu (2021:77) also defined borrowing as taking over words from other languages. We can also say that borrowing is the process through which words are adopted from one language into another. In this sense, it means that borrowed words, also called loanwords, become part of the vocabulary of the host language and are assigned the word classes of the recipient language. A language usually borrows words they lack therefore; one should note that a borrowed word never remains a perfect copy of its original (Abraham & Sadiya 2017). We have observed that Kichonyi borrows a lot of nouns from English and Kiswahili.

Borrowed words are nativized into Kichonyi in terms of spellings and pronunciation which agrees with Mweshi's (2018) observation when he points that the pronunciation and morphology of borrowed items are adapted to the phonology and morphology of the host language. In Kichonyi, we adapt borrowed nouns by inserting vowels between adjacent consonants to conform to the CV syllable structure, as the language avoids complex consonant clusters and final consonants. Through this, we also facilitate the integration of borrowed nouns into the appropriate noun classes of the language. Example 28 in table 25 below illustrates this.

Table 25: Kichonyi Nouns Borrowed from English and Kiswahili

Borrowed Noun	English Gloss	Source Language
a) lu-vanzi	advance (salary)	English
b) –shati	Shirt	English
c) mu-kahe	Bread	Kiswahili
d) –furigi	Fridge	English
e) -suruwale	a pair of shorts	Kiswahili
f) -handaweya	Underwear	English
g) -siturungi	strong tea	English
h) Ma-buts-i	pair of shoes (boots)	English
i) -basikili	Bicycle	English
j) -alufu	a thousand	Kiswahili

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above examples that nouns borrowed from English and Kiswahili are adopted in the Kichonyi by inserting vowels where there are consonant clusters.

Nouns Formed from Reduplication

According to Aziz (2020) reduplication is a process where the entire or parts of free morphemes are copied and attached to the base by adding or changing a syllable. In other words, reduplication is used in inflection to convey a grammatical function, such as plurality and intensification. In derivation, it is used to create new words. Reduplication is often used when a speaker adopts a tone more expressive or figurative than ordinary speech as is also often, but not exclusively, iconic in meaning. It may change the meaning, but the derived meaning is still related to the meaning of the base and the meaning depends on the certain combination of the base and affix (Sneddon 1996). The term 'reduplicant' refers to the copied part of a word, while the term 'base' refers to the root to which the reduplication process applies (McCarthy & Prince 1995:4-7). In Kichonyi, we use reduplication for both derivation and inflection and nouns are particularly formed both from full and partial reduplication. Full or total reduplication is the doubling process of the whole part base word, stem, and root without changing either consonant or vowel (Lieber 2009).

Partial reduplication refers to "only part of the word is being repeated" (Lieber 2009:81). It is not only repeated the beginning of the base, but also medial and the end (Rubino, 2005)

Nouns Formed from Full Reduplication

Full reduplication is a morphological process where the reduplicated form and the base are identical at the segmental level (Ngunga 2002). It is termed "full reduplication" because the entire word is repeated as it is the case with the Kichonyi language. The data in example 29 in table 26 (a) below give more illustrations of Kichonyi nouns that are formed from full reduplication.

Table 26 (a):Showing Full Reduplicated Nouns in Kichonyi

Word	**Reduplicated Noun**	**English gloss**
*nungu (*cigarette butt) *suli (*big muscle) *kolo* (dirty) *rombe (*thick) *bunga* (dull) *kumbi (*palm tree seat)	*nungu-nungu suli-suli* *kolo-kolo rombe-rombe bunga-bunga kumbi –kumbi*	a porcupine a sardine fish an ant a thick soup Sand flying termites

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the examples in table 26 (a) above that, Kichonyi nouns are formed full reduplication, and this involves doubling of the stem where the result is a word with a different class as we see in example 29 (d) where the noun '*rombe-rombe'* is formed by doubling the adjective root *'-rombe'* (thick).

Nouns Formed from Partial Reduplication

Partial reduplication occurs when only a single syllable is duplicated (Nyaga 2014). It is a process that creates new words with meanings related to the root (Alsamadani & Taibah 2019). The data in example 30 in table 26 (b) below, illustrate nouns through from partial reduplication in the Kichonyi language.

Table 26 (b): *Partial reduplicated nouns in Kichonyi.*

Word	**Partial Reduplication**	**English gloss**
a) Ka-bege	*ka-bege-bege*	a traditional dance
b) Chi-dunga	*chi-dunga-dunga*	a blackjack
c) Chi-zungu	*chi-zungu-zungu*	Dizziness
d) Ka-bodze	*ka-bodze-bodze*	a Mimosa Pudica plant
e) Mu-mavi	*mu-mavi-mavi*	a Chenopodium Vuvaria plant
g) Mu-dzanga	*mu-dzanga-dzanga*	a Jatropha plant
h) ka-nying'i	*Ka-nying'i-nying'i*	a child game

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data in table 26 (b) above that in the Kichonyi language partial reduplication on nouns is realized where pre-stem affixes do not reduplicate. As we have seen in the noun *chi-dunga-dunga* (blackjack), the class 13 singular prefix [ka-] is not repeated, instead it is the root *-dunga* that is duplicated. This type of reduplication is also known as CV- reduplication. It involves copying of the first consonant-vowel (CV) sequence of a word and in Kichonyi it serves the function of number marking.

Nouns Formed from Blending

Delahunty & Garvey (2010:137) state that blending is a morphological process that involves taking two or more words, removing parts of each, and joining the residues together to form or create a new word whose form and meaning are taken from the source word. Furthermore, blending is the process whereby new words are formed by combining parts of two words, usually the beginning of one word and the end of another. Blends are created from non- morphemic parts of two already existing items. In Kichonyi language, blending of two words, which are mostly nominal forms, result to blended nouns.

The blend '*mu-lum-a-ngu'* (my husband) is formed when the initial part of '*mulum-'* from the noun *mu-lum-e* (a man) is joined with the second part of *'-angu'* of the pronoun *w-angu* (my). These blends are mostly used to show possessions. Consider the data in example 31 in the table 27 below.

Table 27: *Kichonyi Nouns Formed from Blending*

Root 1 **Gloss**	**Root 2**	**Noun Formed**	**English**
a) mu-lum-e (man)	*-wa-ngu* (my)	*mu-lum-a-ngu*	my husband
b) mu-ch-e (woman)	*-wa-ngu* (my)	*mu-ch-angu*	my wife
c) mu-tsedz-a (in-law)	*-wa-ngu* (my)	*mu-tsedz-a-ngu*	my father-in-law
d) ma-me (mother)	*-somo* (name sake)	*me-somo*	name's sake mother
e) ma-me (mother)	*-washe* (name)	*me-washe*	washe's mother
f) ba-ba (father)	*-mu-vyere* (elder)	*ba-zhele*	my elder father

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 27 above that, in Kichonyi the initial part of one word mostly blends with the first part of the second one.

Nouns Formed from Clipping

Adeniyi, Daniel & Iyere (2010:105-106) point out that clipping is a productive morphological process; not only in English language but also in many African languages. It involves some element of reduction in the length of a word. Clipping can also be seen as extracting a shortened form of a word from its longer morphological form. In English for instance, telephone becomes phone, mic from microphone or advert from advertisement while in Kichonyi, clipping is also evident like in the word '*zimi'* from '*sanga-zimi'* (aunt). More illustrations are given in example 32 in table 28 below.

Table 28: Nouns Formed from Clipping

Full Noun	**Clipped Form**	**English Gloss**
sanga-zimi *mu-koi* *mu-zhere* *ma-haragwe* *mu-tsuzi* *chi-lomba* *mu-tsunga*	*zimi koi zhele* *haragwe tsuzi lomba tsunga*	an aunt a cousin an elder mother beans soup top fat layer of soup a bitter lettuce plant

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 28 above that, in Kichonyi nouns are mostly formed by omitting the initial part of a word to form a new, shorter word. This process is known as fore-clipping and it involves retaining the initial part of the original

word lexemes (Rahayu 2021:74). From the data we conclude that, in the Kichonyi language, nouns are primarily fore-clipped to create emphasis.

Phonological Factors that Determine the Distribution of Singular and Plural Markers in Kichonyi Nouns

This objective utilized the principle of grammatical categories and structures of the Basic Linguistic Theory to establish the various phonological factors that determine the distribution of singular and plural markers in Kichonyi. In 1954, Zellig Harris formalized distributionalism, aiming to analyze linguistic structure based solely on the distribution of linguistic elements, without relying on meaning. For example, in a language where the noun has a rich morphological structure, categories may be coded by affixation or by other morpho-phonological processes. Morphotactics according to Haspelmath (2010) refers to the rules governing the arrangement of morphemes which are the smallest units of meaning or grammatical function within words in a language. It defines permissible sequences of morphemes to form grammatically correct and meaningful words (Ochieng 2023). For instance, in English, the suffix [-s] is added to a noun to indicate plurality, as in 'cats.' Morphotactic rules ensure that morphemes combine in a specific order to convey the intended meaning.

Kichonyi being part of the Niger-Congo language family has its noun derivation taking place against the backdrop of the language's noun class system which distinguishes between singular and plural noun forms with class marking prefixes attached to a root. Erin (2023) suggests that “a language classifies noun stems according to the way they mark both singular and plural”.

Phonological elements such as structures and sound patterns influence the way singular and plural markers are used and distributed in Kichonyi nouns and they are used alongside their grammatical categories as shown in the following examples.

Singular and Plural Markers of Class 1/2 Nouns mu/a

Grammatical marking of number is very rich in Kichonyi nouns. Kichonyi nouns are categorized as singular and plural respective of their classes. Nouns referring to Humans fall under class one singular and class two plural each marked with its own prefix. For instance, among the nouns derived from verbs, specific morphemes are distinguished. The examples below illustrate this.

Prefix + Verb Root **Singular Noun**

a) {mu} + { *band-a}* (destroy) (Class 1- root- FV) → *mu-band-i* (a destroyer) (Class 1- root- FV)

b) {mu} + {*tsek-a}* (laugh) → *mu-tsek-i* (a person who laughs) (Class 1- root- FV) (Class 1- root- FV)

c) {mu} + {*nyol-a}* (shave) (Class 1- root- FV) → *mu-nyol-i* (a barber) (Class 1- root- FV)

In example (33) above notice that, to form, agent nouns from verbs, the singular [mu-] prefix is added to form a singular noun as demonstrated in the verb *‘-band-a’* to (destroy) which changes to *mu-band-i* (a destroyer) where apart from adding [mu-], the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the verb root changes to the high front vowel /i/. The corresponding plural nouns are marked with the prefix [a-] to denote many people. For instance, the singular noun *mu-band-i* (destroyer) changes to *a-band-i* (destroyers) in the plural form. This demonstrates prefix substitution, a process where one prefix takes the place of another changing the meaning or grammatical function of a word. It normally happens in Kichonyi to change both the meaning and the sound of a noun.

Further notice that, in all these examples that all the roots begin with a consonant. In many Bantu languages, nouns are categorized into classes, each marked for number by specific prefixes. Class one nouns are marked by the prefix [mu-], which typically denotes singular nouns referring to humans or agents performing an action. When deriving agentive nouns from verb roots, especially those that begin with a consonant, the [mu-] prefix is directly applied without any root changes to signify the singular form of the person performing the action. This

morphological process aligns with the noun class system's function of number marking and semantic roles within the language.

In its different morpho-phonological forms, the singular [mu-] prefix may change to [mw-] for easier pronunciation. This prefix alteration results from phonological assimilation where the prefix adapts based on the initial sound of the verb root. See the example below.

Prefix + Root		**Plural Noun**
a. {mu} + {*awiz-a}* (help)	⟶	*mw-awaz-i* (a helper)
(Class 1- root- FV)		(Class 1- root- FV)
b. {mu} + {*ar-a}* (advise)	⟶	*mw-ar-i* (an advice)
(Class 1- root- FV)		(Class 1- root- FV)
c. {Mu} + {*andik-a}* (write)	⟶	*mw-andik-i* (a writer) (Class 1- root- FV) (Class 1- root- FV)

Notice in the above examples that, when the verb root begins with a vowel, the [mu-] prefixes in the singular agent nouns changes to [mw-]. This occurs because Bantu languages prefer open syllables with a consonant-vowel (CV) structure. Directly attaching the [mu-] prefix to a vowel-initial root would create a vowel hiatus which is typically avoided. To resolve this, the high-back vowel /u/ in the [mu-] singular noun marker glides into a semi- vowel /w/ when followed by another vowel, forming [mw-]. This adjustment ensures smoother sound transitions and maintains the language's phonotactic rules.

Additionally, in the formation of singular class nouns from verb roots such as *'-rind-a' (*guard*),* using the singular marker *[mu],* root changes occur exemplifying a process known as spirantization. According to Trask (1996) Spirantization is the weakening of a stop consonant into a fricative or approximant, typically conditioned by its phonetic environment. In Bantu languages it is common for stops like /d/ to soften or shift to fricatives /z/ in specific phonological contexts. In this case, the final stop /d/ in '*-rind-a'* (guard) changes to the alveolar fricative /z/ due to the influence of the high front vowel /i/ which creates a phonological environment that favors the fricative /z/ over the stop /d/. Cross reference with examples in table 4 which Shows nouns derived from verbs with a different combination with the root. In these examples, notice that the alveolar stop /d/ and velar stop /g/ in the verb roots change to the alveolar fricative /z/ at the end of the stem. Notice further that the low front vowel [a] at the end of the verb root changes to the high front vowel /i/.

In the noun '*mu-rinz-i'* (a guard) the fricative /z/ may also emerge to maintain phonotactic harmony within the word. The suffix [-i], with its high vowel quality, can influence preceding consonants, making the alveolar fricative /z/ preferable than the alveolar stop /d/ for smoother articulation.

There is a greater association of members of class one and two nouns in Kichonyi with case category. Case refers to the grammatical function of a noun within a sentence (Yergeshbayevna 2024). While English has lost most of its case distinctions compared to older forms of the language like Old English, it still retains some vestiges. The most common cases in English are nominative (subject of the sentence), accusative (direct object) and possessive (indicating ownership or association. In the Kichonyi language the subjective case is most common especially on class one and two nouns. Agent nouns take the subject position to show a person who does as shown in the above examples. The prefixes mu/a are indicative of this case realization in Kichonyi.

Singular and Plural mu-/mi- Marker of Class 3/4 Nouns

In Kichonyi, nouns referring to inanimate objects can be derived from verb roots. Singular nouns are marked by the prefix [mu] while plurals are marked by [mi] typically belonging to class 3/4 of Kichonyi nouns. These class markers are also indicative of regular number marking. Cross reference with the examples in table 6

which show inanimate nouns formed by adding prefix [mu] /[mi] for more examples.

Notice in these examples in table 6 that, all the verbs from which these nouns are formed begin with a consonant. To form inanimate nouns in Kichonyi, simply add the prefix [mu-] to a verb, to form a singular noun where the singular prefix [mu-] is fully retained. To form the corresponding plural, we substitute the singular prefix [mu-] with [mi-]. Additionally, the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the verb root changes to mid-back vowel /o/. Members of class three and four show regular patterns of marking number. In its morpho-phonological variations, the prefix may [mu-] change to [mw-] as we see in the verb root *-andik-a* (write) which changes to '*mw-andik-o'* (handwriting). More illustrations are given in example 35 in table 29 below.

Table 29: *Change of Prefix [mu-] to [mw-] on Roots Beginning with Vowels.*

Prefix	**Root**	**Singular Noun**	**English Gloss**
a) mu-	*-anya*	*mw-anya*	a gap
b) mu-	*-andi*	*mw-andiko*	a handwriting
c) mu-	*-aka*	*mw-aka*	a year
d) mu-	*-ezi*	*mw-ezi*	a month
e) mu-	*-ingo*	*mw-ingo*	a flywhisk
f) mu-	*-izu*	*mw-izu*	magadi

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 29 above that, in the formation of a singular noun in Kichonyi by adding the prefix [mu-], the high back vowel /u/ in the class prefix changes to the velar glide/w/ and this only happens when the root starts with a vowel.

Furthermore, the plural prefix [mi-] may resurface as [mj-] as illustrated in example 36 in table 30 below.

Table 30: /Mi-/ Pluralization on Roots Beginning with Vowels

Prefix	**Root**	**Plural Noun**	**English Gloss**
a) mi-	*-anya* (space)	*mj-anya*	spaces
b) mi-	*-ongo* (back)	*mj-ongo*	backs
c) mi-	*-aka* (year)	*mj-aka*	years
d) mi-	*-ezi* (month)	*mj-ezi*	months
e) mi-	*-oho* (fire)	*mj-oho*	fires

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 30 above that, when forming plural nouns from roots beginning with vowels, the high back vowel /u/ in the prefix [mu-] changes to the palatal glide /j/. This adjustment smoother sound transitions and maintains phonotactic rules of Kichonyi.

Singular and Plural dzi-/ma- Marker of Class 5/6 Nouns

The singular prefix [dzi-] and the plural affix [ma-] are used to form nouns referring to body parts, plants, objects, and abstract concepts, categorizing them within noun class 5 and 6. Example 37 in table 31 below illustrates this.

Table 31: *The Dzi-/Ma- Singular/Plural Noun Markers*

Singular Noun	**Plural Noun**
dzi-bwe (a sweet potato leaf)	*ma-bwe* (sweet potato leaves)
dzi-no (a tooth)	*me-no* (teeth)
dzi-tso (an eye)	*ma-tso* (eyes)
dzi-we (a stone)	*ma-we* (stones)
dzi-ambo (an issue)	*ma-mbo* (issues)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 31 above that in Kichonyi, to form nouns referring to body parts, plants, objects, and abstract ideas, singular forms are marked by [dzi]. The corresponding plurals are marked by the prefix [ma] indicating a regular number marking pattern.

The morpho-phonological variations of these class prefixes arise due to vowel harmony and Phonotactic constraints. Katamba (1989:211) describes vowel harmony as a phonological process in which vowels within the same domain- typically a word- share certain features such as like lip rounding or tongue position. On the other hand, phonotactic constraints as explained by Fasold & Conor-Linton (2006) impose restrictions on which sounds can occur together or in specific positions within the word. In line to this, we have seen in Kichonyi that these variations result from the influence of preferred syllable structures, such as CV or CVC which determine phonological compatibility between the prefix and the root. For instance, the combination of the prefix [*ma-]* with the root *-ino* forms a plural noun '*me- no'* (teeth), instead of '*ma-eno'* to preserve the CV structure.

Singular and Plural Markers of Class 7/8 Nouns [chi-] / [vi-]

Structurally, singular the prefix [chi-] and the plural prefix [vi-] are used to form nouns referring to objects, instruments, body parts and animals from verbs like '*-nol-a'* (sharpen) which changes to *'chi-nol-o'* (a sharpening stone) falling under classes 7/8. Also cross refer with examples in table 9 which shows Kichonyi nouns denoting instruments that are formed by adding the prefix [chi-] / [vi-] for further evidence.

Notice in the examples in table 9 that all the verb roots from which these nouns are formed begin with a consonant. Nouns formed from a verb to denote an instrument, are marked by the prefix [chi-] for singular nouns and [vi-] for plurals. The prefixes [chi-] / [vi-] are fully retained. Notice further that final low front vowel /a/ in the verb root changes to the mid- back vowel /o/.

In singular noun formation with the prefix [chi-], vowel harmony can affect how the prefix interacts with the root vowel. Check example 38 in table 32 below for illustrations.

Table 32: Variations on the [chi-] / [vi-] Singular and Plural Noun Markers

Prefix	Root	Singular NounPlural	Noun
chi-/vi-	*-amb-o*	*ch-amb-o* (bait)	*vj-amb-o* (baits)
chi-/vi-	*-ehul-a (*serve*)*	*ch-ehul-o* (serving spoon)	*vj-ehul-o (*serving
spoons)	*-omb-o*	*ch-omb-o* (utensil)	*vj-omb-o* (utensils)
chi-/vi-	*-un-u*	*ch-un-u* (waist)	*vj-um-u* (waists)
chi-/vi-	*-umb-a (*create*)*	*ch-umb-a* (room)	*vj-umb-a* (rooms)
chi-/vi-			

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in these examples in table 32 that all the roots from which these nouns are formed begin with a vowel. In the formation of singular using the prefix [chi-], vowels are harmonized to ease articulation only when the root word starts with a vowel.

The prefix [vi-] may change to [vj-] for smoother articulation as presented in the examples in table 32 above. In these examples we notice that, in the formation of a plural noun in Kichonyi by adding the prefix [vi-], the high front vowel /i/ in the class prefix changes to a palatal glide /j/ and this only happens when the root starts with a vowel.

Singular and Plural Markers of class 11/12 [lu-] / [nyu-]

The prefix [lu-] singular and [nyu-] plural are used to form nouns that refer to land, physical features, instruments, objects, and body parts and typically belong to class 11 and 12 of nouns. This is illustrated with the following examples from the Kichonyi language.

Singular Noun		**Plural Noun**
a) lu-fu (corpse)	→	*nyu-fu* (corpses)
(Class 11- root)		(class 12- root)
b) lu-zi (a thread)	→	*nyu-zi* (threads)
(Class 11- root)		(class 12 – root)
c) lu-ngo (winnowing tray)	→	*nyu-ngo* (winnowing trays)
(class 11- root)		(class 12- root)

Notice in the examples presented above that all the roots from which these nouns are formed begin with a consonant. Therefore, to form these nouns, add the prefix [lu-] for singular forms where the [lu-] prefix is fully retained. The prefix [nyu-] added to roots to form plurals.

Despite the members of class [lu] nouns showing a regular pattern of marking number, there are however other the singular class [lu-] nouns derived from verbs that begin with consonants that show irregularities. This is illustrated in the following data.

Verb Root	Meaning	Derived Singular	Morphological Structure (Singular)	Derived Plural	Morphological Structure (Plural)
-sher-a	sweep	**lu-sher-o** (a broom)	class 11 prefix + root + final vowel (lu- + sher + -o)	**sher-o** (brooms)	root + final vowel (sher + -o)
-fidz-a	stir	**lu-fidz-o** (a stirring rod)	class 11 prefix + root + final vowel (lu- + fidz + -o)	**fidz-o** (stirring rods)	root + final vowel (fidz + -o)
-choch-a	dip	**lu-choch-o** (a dipping thread)	class 11 prefix + root + final vowel (lu- + choch + -o)	**choch-o** (dipping rods)	root + final vowel (choch + -o)

This format is suitable for inclusion in a linguistics dissertation or research paper.

In these examples notice that, in the singular form, nouns referring to instruments are marked by the prefix [lu-] while in the plural form, they are not marked by any prefix and this mostly occur in the environment before the fricatives /ʃ/ and /f/ or the voiceless affricate /tf/. Further notice that, the low front vowel /a/ at the end of the verb root is replaced with the mid-back vowel /o/.

There are other classes of nouns especially those referring to body parts and concrete objects that are also marked by a zero prefix in their plural forms. However, their plural forms are exceptional. Check example 41 in table 33 below.

Table 33: Deletion of the [lu-] Plural Marker.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
lu-dea (a jaw)	*n-dea* (jaws)
lu-dodo (a dry branch)	*n-dodo* (dry branches)
lu-dago (a nutsedge weed)	*n-dago* (nutsedge weeds)
lu-bala (a piece of food)	*m-bala* (pieces of food)
lu-bao (a piece of wood)	*m-bao* (pieces of wood)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data presented in table 33 above that, when forming plural nouns from singular nouns in the [lu-] class, the prefix is replaced with the nasal /n-/. Additionally, the initial stops /b/ and /d/ in the root transform to the pre-nasalized stops */nd/* and */mb/* respectively. In other words, the nasal */n/* is realized as /n/ before an alveolar stop and as */m/* before a bilabial stop.

Regarding its morpho-phonological variations, the prefix /lu-/ may change to /lw-/ contributing to smoother articulation like in the example from the root '*-ayo*' which forms the singular noun '*lw-ayo'* (a foot). See more data in example 42 in table 34 below.

Table 34: Singular and Plural Markers for Roots Starting with a Vowel.

Prefix	Root	Singular Noun	Plural Noun
a) lu-	*-ayo*	*lw-ayo* (foot)	*ny-ayo (*feet)
b) lu -	*-ago*	*lw-ago* (step)	*ny-ago* (steps*)*
c) lu-	*-alwa*	*lw-alwa* (grinding stone)	*ny-alwa* (grinding stones*)*
d) lu-	*-angwa*	*lw-angwa* (dry part of an ocean)	*ny-angwa* (parts of oceans*)*
e) lu-	*-engu*	*lw-engu* (pancreas)	*ny-engu* (pancreata)
f) lu-	*-iga*	*lw-iga* (clay bowl)	*ny-iga* (clay bowls*)*

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in table 34 above that the singular class [lu-] nouns have the high-back vowel /u/ changing to the velar glide /w/ when the first sound of the root is a vowel. This effort aims to eliminate consonant clusters within words to achieve a simpler structure.

Distribution of Diminutives in Kichonyi

In its structure, the prefix [ka-] and [vi-] are usually attached to a noun root to derive nouns that refer to diminutives with the meaning "a nice little something" from nouns like in *-paka* (a cat). These nouns belong to class 13/8a of nouns as shown in the following illustrations.

	Noun Root	**Derived Singular Noun**	**Derived Plural Noun**
a)	- *bata* (a duck) (class 13- root)	*ka-bata* (a little nice duck) (class 8a- root)	*u-bata* (nice little ducks) (root) (class
b)	- *kuro* (a dog) (class 13- root)	*ka-kuro* (a little nice dog) (class 8a- root)	*u-kuro* (nice little dogs) (root) (class
c)	- *paka* (a cat) root)	*ka-paka* (a nice little cat) (class 8a- root)	*u-paka* (nice little cats) (root) (class 13-
d)	- *muche* (a woman) (class 13- root)	*ka-dzi-che* (a little nice woman) (class 8a- pre-prefix- root)	*u-dzi-che* (nice little women) (root)

Notice in the above examples that the roots from which these nouns are formed begin with consonants. Therefore, to form diminutives in Kichonyi, the prefix [ka-] is added to other nouns to derive singular nouns and [vi-] for plural. Further notice that, there are nouns especially those that refer to people that have an additional element [dzi-] which is part of the morpho-phonological structure to enhance class concord like in the noun '*-mu-che'* (a woman) which changes to '*ka-dzi-che'* (a little nice woman) by adding prefix [dzi-] to derive perojatory nouns. Crystal (1997) states that perojation is a term used in historical linguistics in the classification of types of semantic changes to refer to the development of a sense of disproval in a lexical item.

Distribution of Gigantic Nouns in Kichonyi

Structurally, the prefixes [ri-] / [mi-] are usually attached to the adjective or noun root to derive nouns with the meaning, "a big ugly something." These nouns belong to class 19/4a. Check the examples below.

Table 44. Derivation of Singular and Plural Nouns from Adjective Roots

Adjective Root	**Meaning**	**Derived Singular**	**Morphological Structure (Singular)**	**Derived Plural**	**Morphological Structure (Plural)**
-gumu	hard	**ri-gumu** (a big ugly miser)	class 19 prefix + root (ri- + gumu)	**mi-gumu** (big ugly misers)	class 4a prefix + root (mi- + gumu)
-jinga	foolish	**ri-jinga** (a big foolish person)	class 19 prefix + root (ri- + jinga)	**mi-jinga** (big foolish people)	class 4a prefix + root (mi- + jinga)
-vaha	younger	**ri-vaha** (a big younger person)	class 19 prefix + root (ri- + vaha)	**mi-vaha** (big younger people)	class 4a prefix + root (mi- + vaha)

This version follows a consistent linguistic glossing format and is suitable for use in a thesis or journal article.

(More examples are also illustrated in table 12 showing gigantic nouns formed from other nouns by adding the prefix [ri-] / [mi-]).

Notice in the above examples that, to form a gigantic noun in Kichonyi from adjectives and other nouns, add the singular prefix [mu-] for singular and [mi-] for plurals. These prefixes are strongly preferred because the roots

they attach to typically begin with consonants ensuring phonological fluidity.

In their morphological variations, we note that there are some exceptions. That is, there is a change in the root of the noun like in the noun '*nyu-mba,'* (a house) which changes '*ri- dzu-mba'* (a big ugly house) where the affix [dzi-] is inserted between the prefix and the root. This phonological adaptation leads to changes that help preserve syllable structure and facilitate smoother pronunciation. From this example, further notice that the roots have a different combination with the affix [dzi-]. We see that the [dzi-] pre-prefix drop the vowel /i/ to combine with these roots. We argue that these words could be because of vowel deletion which occurs mostly whenever two vowels are in contact. When two vowels of different morphemes are in contact in the same word and the two vowels have the same phonological features, it is possible for one of the vowels to be deleted to avoid redundancy.

Distribution of Borrowed Nouns in Kichonyi

Borrowed are influenced by various phonological factors that shape their adaptation from source languages like Kiswahili and English. One of the factors is syllable structure adaptation. Kichonyi like many Bantu languages prefers open syllables (CV structure). Borrowed nouns with consonant clusters or final consonants from donor languages are adapted to fit this structure. Check example 45 in table 35 below for illustrations.

Table 35: How Borrowed Nouns Change from Singular to Plural

Borrowed Noun (Singular)	**Plural Noun**	**Source Language**
mu-kahe (a bread) *-dakitari* (a doctor) *mu-sichana* (a girl) *mu-tu (*a person) *chi-lasi* (a class) *-siturungi* (a strong tea) *-buraza/-biro (*a brother) *ma-buti* (a pair of boots) *-basikili* (a bicycle)	*mi-kahe* (breads) *ma-daktari* (doctors) *a-sichana* (girls) *a-tu* (people) *vi-lasi* (classes) *si-turungi* (strong tea) *-buraza/-biro* (brothers) *ma-butsi* (pairs of boots) *-basikili* (bicycles)	Kiswahili Kiswahili Kiswahili Kiswahili English English English English English

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the above table that, in the formation of singular and plurals of Kichonyi borrowed words, the distribution is influenced by the respective classes. For example, the noun '*chi-lasi'* changes to '*vi-lasi'* meaning that the singular prefix [chi-] changes to [vi-] classifying it in classes seven & eight of Kichonyi nouns. Further notice that vowels are inserted on Kichonyi borrowed nouns to break consonant clusters.

Another factor is consonant substitution which is defined by Watera (2014:49) as a linguistic process in which a consonant is replaced by a completely different consonant. In the process of borrowing nouns, we have noted that some consonants are substituted so that the nouns can fit into the Kichonyi language. This is done by replacing non-native sounds with the closest phonological equivalents from its phonemic inventory. For example, in the Kiswahili noun *'ki-tabu'* (a book) the velar stop /k/ changes to the affricate /tf/ in the Kichonyi equivalent *'chi-tabu'* as the word is adapted to conform to the phonological patterns and grammatical structure of the Kichonyi language.

Morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of Kichonyi Nouns.

According to Hyman (1975), morph phonological processes refer to the systematic changes in the pronunciation (phonological form) of morphemes that occur due to their interaction with other morphemes in specific morphological contexts. We can also say that these processes involve the interface between morphology (the structure of words) and phonology (the sound system), showing how morphemes adjust their forms when

combined, such as through assimilation, vowel harmony, deletion, insertion, or alternation.

Morpho-phonological processes are significant because they reveal how language structures are organized and how speakers produce and understand complex words. These rules help linguists understand sound alternations both within and across word boundaries, reveal the relationship between underlying morphemes and their surface forms and shed light on how children acquire language and how phonological rules interact with morphological structures. These insights are essentials in fields such as phonology and morphology of which we have focused on.

We have provided morpho-phonological rules to explain each process and identified various morpho-phonological processes that determine the distribution of singular and plural nouns which fall under the category; morpho-phonological processes involving consonants and morpho-phonological processes involving vowels.

Morpho-phonological processes involving Consonants.

We have established that in Kichonyi, most of the consonant changes involve the noun prefix where alterations occur when the morpheme for the noun prefix is added to another morpheme of a root word to form a stem.

These processes include consonant weakening, nasalization, homorganic nasal assimilation Ganda law and labialization.

Consonant weakening

Consonant weakening is a widespread morpho-phonological phenomenon present in many languages. According to Grijzenhout (1996), consonant weakening processes are understood as deletion of an aperture node. These processes can involve changes such as a reduction from a long closure to short one, a shift from complete closure to partial approximation, and from approximation to deletion. In Kichonyi, we have clearly observed that this process is influenced by the nasal environment created by the [mu-] prefix where the verbs '*-rind-a' (*guard*)* and '*-zing-a' (*be immoral) become the nouns '*mu-rinz-i'* (guard) and '*mu-zinz-i' (*immoral person) rather than '*mu-rind-a'* and '*mu-zing-a'* as illustrated in the following example.

	Prefix + Root		**Singular Noun**	
a)	*{mu}* +{ *rind-a}* (guard)	⟶	*mu-rinz-i* (a guard) (class 1- root- FV)	(class 1- root- FV)
b)	*{Mu}* + *{zing-a}* (be immoral)	⟶	*mu-zinz-i* (an immoral person) (class 1- root- FV)	(class 1- root- FV)

In the examples above, observe that the verb roots '*-rind-a'* (guard) and *'-zing-a'* (be immoral) which apart from being prefixed with [mu-**]**, have a different combination with the root. The alveolar stop /d/ and velar stop /g/ become alveolar fricative /z/ in the environment before a high front vowel /i/.

The rule for this process thus is as follows.

/d/ ⟶ **/z/** / ____ **/i/**

The rule can be put in words as follows:

An alveolar stop /d/ becomes an alveolar fricative /z/ in the environment before a high front vowel /i/.

Nasalization

Katamba (1989:93) defines nasalization as a process in which an oral segment acquires nasality from a neighboring segment. The articulatory motivation for this is also quite clear: To produce a nasal sound, the velum

(soft palate) must be lowered, allowing air to escape through the nose. The more the soft palate is lowered, the greater the degree of nasalization.

In the Kichonyi language, nouns come from nasal class prefixes. Check the illustrations below,

Singular Noun **Plural Noun**

c) *lu-fa (*a crack) ⟶ *nyu-fa (cracks)*

(class 11 – root) (class 12- root)

d) lu-gwe (a rope) ⟶ *nyu-gwe* (ropes) (class 11 – root) (class 12- root)

The data in example 46 above demonstrates a shift from singular to plural using a nasal prefix highlighting both morphological (prefix change) and phonological (nasal sound insertion) processes.

Also cross refer with example eight in table 11 which shows Kichonyi noun class [lu-] instruments that are pluralized to [nyu-] for more data.

In the examples in (46) and the data in table 11 referred above notice, that the prefix **[**lu-**]** becomes nasalized to [nyu-] when singular nouns are changed to plural. The lateral /l-/ in the prefix is nasalized when the stem of the noun begins with a velar stop /g/, an alveolar fricative /z/, labiodental fricative, /f/ or a velar nasal /ŋ/

The rule for this process is as follows.

[lu] ⟶ [nyu] / ___ /g/, /z/, /f/, /ŋ/

The rule can be put in words as follows:

The prefix [lu-] changes to [nyu-] in the environment before a consonant (g, z, f, ŋ).

Homorganic Nasal Assimilation

Homorganic nasal assimilation is a natural process governed by the anatomy of the articulatory tract (Abercrombie 1967). It is a morpho-phonological assimilation process in which a nasal segment adjusts in anticipation of the place of articulation of the following consonant aligning with it in terms of articulation. This process can sometimes obscure the underlying segment, leading to nasal assimilation after an obstruent, particularly in the cases where a segment has been deleted (Iribe 2008:168). The main motivation behind this process is to minimize the articulatory effort involved in producing two segments. Akida (2012) further explains that voicing may also extends or 'spill over' into adjacent segments.

This process takes place in relation to voiced obstruent, and where a resonant appears it is further processed and realized as an obstruent. Like many other morpho-phonological processes, Homorganic Nasal assimilation primarily serves to simplify the articulation of different phonological items and reduce complexities (Iribe 2008:168). In Kichonyi language, this process is seen in the archiphoneme [n] and [m]. Trubetskoy (1939) defines an archiphoneme as a phonological unit that captures the shared features of two or more phonemes involved in neutralization. Archiphonemes are linked to morphological analysis by offering an underlying representation for sound alternation resulting from morpho- morphological processes. See illustrations in example 47 in table 36 below.

Table 36: Homorganic Nasal Assimilation on Kichonyi Nouns

Prefix	**Root**	**Noun Formed (Plural)**
a) n-	*-dea*	*n-dea* (jaws)

b) n-	*-donga*	*n-donga* (medicine gourds)
c) n-	*-data*	*n-data* (canning sticks)
d) n-	*-bao*	*m-bao* (pieces of wood)
e) n-	*-bala*	*m-bala* (pieces of a mango)
f) n-	*-boko*	*m-boko* (goblets)

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in the data in example 47 table 36 above that the nasal assimilates in place of articulation, surfacing as /n/ before the alveolar stop /d/ and as /m/ before the bilabial stop /b/.

The rule is as follows.

The rule can be put in words as follows:

A nasal /n/ changes to /m/ in the environment before a bilabial consonant /b/

Ganda law

Ganda law is a process denoting consonant deletion (Iribe 2008:180) and is also referred to as 'Mienhof law' as quoted by Herbert (1977). Iribe (2008) emphasizes that the name was coined by the Bantu linguist Carl Meinhorf (1968) during his analysis of the Luganda language. In the law, Meinhorf postulates that a stem-initial consonant is usually deleted when it follows a nasal consonant and is itself followed by a sequence of a vowel and a nasal consonant. This process is evident in the Kichonyi language as shown in example 48 in table 37 below.

Table 37: Ganda Law on Kichonyi Nouns

N + Root	**Noun Formed**	**English Gloss**
a) */n + ganzi/*	*ŋ-anzi*	Stories
b) */n +gonda/*	*ŋ-ɔnda*	dried fish
c) */n +gonzi/*	*ŋ-ɔnzi*	Sheep
d) */n +gambo/*	*ŋ-ambo*	the other side
e) */n + gombe/*	*ŋ-ɔmbɛ*	a cow

Source: Field data 2025

In example 48 in table 37 above, it can be observed that the nasal /n/ is followed by the velar stop /g/ which despite being a stop, it undergoes deletion. Prior to deletion, however, the velar stop /g/ harmonizes with /n/.

The rule for the above process can be presented as follows.

The rule can be put in words as follows:

A velar stop [g] is deleted in the environment before the nasal [n].

Labialization

Labialization involves the rounding or protrusion of the lips, applied to sounds typically produced with the lips in a neutral or spread (Clark & Yallop 1954:64). This process modifies the primary articulation by extending the vocal tract and changing its cross-sectional shape. According to Hyman (1988), labialization is a secondary modification of consonants, where, alongside the primary constriction, the lips are rounded, giving the consonant /u/ or /p/ coloring during pronunciation. In Kichonyi, labialization is illustrated in example 49 in table 38 below.

Table 38: Labialization Process in Kichonyi

Noun	**Transcription**	**English Gloss**
a) ku-eza	*[‘Kpeza]*	Octopus
b) ku-alo	*[‘kpalo]*	Hoof
c) ku-aha	*[‘kpaha]*	Armpit
d) ku-anya	*[‘kpanya’]*	hairy caterpillar
e) ku-ang’a	*[‘kpang’a]*	rock hyrax

Source: Field data 2025

As shown in the table above, the velar consonant /k/ in the Kichonyi language is

labialized when it precedes a round vowel, either /ɔ/ or /u/, but not when followed by a non-rounded vowel.

The driving force behind this process is the presence of the round vowel /u/. This occurs when a consonant comes before a round vowel, resulting in the consonant acquiring [+ round] features.

The rule for the above process is as follows.

[ku] ~~[kp]~~ > / v [+ round] The rule can be put in words as follows,

The high back vowel /u/ in the prefix [ku-] is deleted and the velar stop /k/ is labialized to form [kp-] when followed by a vowel initial root.

Morpho-phonological processes involving Vowels.

According to Bauer (2003:60) there are many phonological processes in the languages of the world whose application is determined by boundaries of units larger than the segment. Some can apply at the end of a syllable or at the beginning of a morpheme. The application of these processes is influenced by a unit which can identify as a word form. These processes have helped us in providing an extra way of determining where the boundary of the word falls. The study has shown that, glide formation, deletion and vowel insertion as morpho-phonological processes occur in the Kichonyi language.

Glide formation

Mukanda (2022) defines glide formation as a morpho-phonological process where the first of two adjacent vowels become a semi-vowel. Similarly, Iribe (2008) describes glide formation as a strategy to reduce vowel clusters. He further explains that it represents a form of fortition, since glides occupy higher position than vowels

on the phonological strength hierarchy. Thus, the transformation of a vowel into a semi-vowel is considered a form of strengthening.

In Kichonyi, glide formation involves the glides /w/ and /j/ and occurs across morphophonemic word boundaries. It remains clear that this process of glide formation is an attempt to eliminate vowel clusters within words (Mukanda 2022). This aligns with our observation that once vowel coalescence is broken; a less complex structure is achieved making it easier to pronounce a glide than two successive vowels.

Abdulmajid (2000) identifies two types of glide formation; those that occur on the stem and those that occur on the root.

He notes that, stem-level glide formation involves the assimilation of both the noun root vowel and the prefix vowel, resulting in the formation of the velar glide /w/.

Glides which are formed on the stem occur in Kichonyi as shown below.

Prefix + Verb Root **Singular Noun**

a) mu + *ehul-a* (serve) → *mw-ehul-i* (a person who serves) (class 1- root- FV) (class 1- root- FV)

b) mu + *ar-a* (advise) → *mw-ar-i* (an advisor)

(class 1- root- FV) (class 1- root- FV)

The example above illustrates how the singular prefix [mu-] changes to [mw-] when the verb root begins with a vowel ensuring smoother sound transitions and adherence to the language's phonotactic rules. Also, cross refer example 2 in table 3 showing nouns derived from verbs by adding [mw-] for further information. Notice from the data given that, in the formation of doer nouns, the high back vowel /u/ in the noun class prefixes changes to a glide when it precedes a vowel. This occurs when the singular prefix [mu-] is added to a root that begins with a vowel.

Glides can also originate from within the root where they are formed internally at the medial position of the word. The same morpho-phonological rule that governs glide formation on the stem, applies for glide formation within the root as well.

Singular nouns that are formed by adding the prefix [lu-] refer to objects and body parts are formed the same way as the nouns formed by adding [mu-] to refer to humans as shown below.

Prefix + Root **Singular Noun**

b) lu + alwa *lw-alwa* (a grinding stone) →

(class 11- root) (class 11- root)

c) lu + ago *lw-ago* (a step)

→

(class 11- root) (class 11- root)

d) lu + engu *lw-engu* (a pancreas) →

(class 11- root) (class 11- root)

In the example above, notice that in the formation of singular nouns by adding the prefix, [lu-], the high back vowel /u/ in the class prefix changes to a velar glide/w/ when it precedes a vowel.

Similarly, when the noun class prefix [mu-] is added to adjectival roots, the same kind of change is observed. Check the data in example 52 in table 39 below.

Table 39: Singular Nouns that Refer to People Formed from Adjectives

Prefix	**Adjective Root**	**Derived Singular Noun**	**English Gloss**
a) mu-	*-eruhe (*white)	*mw-eruhe*	a white hen
b) mu-	*-embamba* (thin)	*mw-embamba*	a thin person
c) mu-	*-itsi* (foolish)	*mw-itsi*	a foolish person
d) mu-	*-eru* (black)	*mw-eru*	black person
e) mu-	*-alamu* (wide)	*mw-alamu*	wide face

Source: Field data 2025

Notice in example 52 in table 39 above that, when forming plural nouns from adjective roots that refer to people, the prefix [mu-] is added to the roots. Further notice that, the vowel /u-/ in the prefix [mu-] changes to the glide /w/ when it is followed by another vowel.

Furthermore, nouns that are formed from adjectives by adding the prefix [u-] to refer to abstract ideas also involve gliding of vowels. The data below demonstrates this.

Prefix + Noun Root **Abstract Noun**

a) u + *-eruhe* (white) ⟶ *w-eruhe* (whiteness)

(class 14- root) (class 14- root)

b) u + *-uku* **(**vulgar) ⟶ *w-uku* (vulgarity) (class 14- root) (class 14- root)

c) u + *-alamu* (wide) ⟶ *w-alamu* (wideness) (class 14- root) (class 14- root)

Notice in the example above that, in the formation of Kichonyi nouns from adjectives that begins with a vowel, the prefix /u-/ changes to the velar glide /w/.

The rule is as follows.

u ⟶ **w** / **/v/**

The rule can be put in words as follows:

A high back vowel /u/ becomes a velar glide /w/ in the environment before a vowel (a, e, i) Glide formation also take place on plural nouns that take the prefix [vi-]. Check the data below.

Prefix + Root **Plural Noun**

d) {vi} + {ambo} ⟶ *vj-ambo* (baits) (class 8- root) (class 8- root)

e) {Vi} + {ombo} ⟶ *vj-ombo* (utensils)

(class 8- root) (class 8- root)

f) {vi} + {unu} ⟶ vjunu (waists)

(class 8- root) (class 8- root)

In the example given above notice that, when the plural prefix **[**vi-] is attached to a root that begins with a vowel, the vowel is replaced with the palatal glide /j-/.

Similarly, /j-/ can also be formed by gliding in the case where the high front vowel /i/ glides to a /y-/. This morpho-phonological change is shown with plural nouns in Kichonyi which are prefixed with [mi-].

The example below illustrates this.

Prefix + Root **Plural Noun**

g) {mi} + {anya} ⟶ *mj-anya* (spaces)

(class 4- root) (class 4- root)

h) {mi} + {aka} ⟶ *mj-aka* (years)

(class 4- root) (class 4- root)

i) {mi} + {ezi} ⟶ *mj-ezi* (months)

(class 4- root) (class 4- root)

In this example notice that the high front vowel /i/ in the plural prefix [mi-] changes to the palatal glide /j/ when it occurs before a root that begins with a vowel.

The rule for this process is as follows.

/i/ ⟶ /j/ / — v

This process can be put in words as follows,

The high front vowel /i/ becomes a palatal glide when it occurs before a vowel.

Deletion

Deletion refers to the omission of one or more sounds as noted by (Mose 2020). Allison (2017) further explains that this process may involve the loss of a vowel, a consonant, or a suprasegmental feature.

In Kichonyi, we observe that nouns undergo Consonant deletion at the word initial as shown in the example below.

Singular Noun **Plural Noun**

j) *lu-kombe* (nail) ⟶ *kombe* (nails)

(class 11- root) (plural noun)

k) *lu-kanza (*palm leaf) ⟶ *kanza* (palm leaves) (class 11- root) (plural noun)

l)

m) *lu-kolo* (a clan) → *kolo* (clans)

(class 11- root) (plural noun)

Also cross refer with example 11 in table 12 which shows names of instruments formed from verbs by adding [lu-] for more data.

Notice in these examples, that in the formation of plural nouns in Kichonyi, singular nouns referring to instruments delete the prefix [lu-] when the first sound of the verb root is the fricatives /f/ and /ʃ/**,** velar stop /k/ bilabial stop **/b**/ or the palate-alveolar affricate /tf/**.** Also notice in some instances that the low front vowel /a/ at the end changes to the mid back vowel /o/.

The rule for this process is as follows.

lu → Φ / ___ **/ʃ/, /f/, /b/, /k/ or /tf/**

The rule can be put in words as follows:

A lateral /l/ is deleted in the environment before a consonant **(/ʃ/, /f/, /b/, /k/ or /tf/)**

Deletion in Kichonyi also happens in the formation of doer nouns using the prefix [mu]. Check example 57 below.

57) Prefix + Root **Singular Noun**

a) Mu +olaga → m-olag-i (a killer)

b) Mu + ocha → m-och-i (a person who roasts)

c) Mu + okola → m-okol-i (a savior)

From the example above, we notice that, when forming an agent noun from a verb root that begins with the mid-back vowel /o/, the high back vowel /u/ is realized as /o/.

Similarly, singular nouns formed using the prefix {chi} undergo deletion. See the example below

Prefix + Root **Singular Noun**

a) chi + ango → *ch-ango* (a food storage basket) (class 7- root) (class 7- root)

b) chi + ala → *ch-ala* (a finger)

(class 7- root) (class 7- root)

c) chi + api → *ch-api* (a beetle)

(class 7- root) (class 7- root)

In the example above notice that, roots that begin with vowels have the vowels in the prefixes deleted which helps to ease pronunciation.

Vowel insertion

This process refers to the addition of a sound into a borrowed word (Watera 2014:50); often resulting in the

emergence of new segments in previously empty marginal positions within a word or morpheme, or between two adjacent segments (Lass 2000). This process is termed as epenthesis. More specifically, anaptysis refers to the insertion of a vowel between two consonants, typically between sonorants or within obstruent +sonorant (obs + Son) or sonorant + obstruent (Son + Obs) clusters. Our study clearly shows that; this type of insertion is common particularly in words borrowed from English or Kiswahili. Such insertions modify the syllable structure to align with the preferred open syllable pattern, typically a CVCV structure. From the findings of this study, we therefore agree that, this process is purely phonological in motivation, driven by the need to conform to a syllable structure that avoids consonant clusters.

Vowels are inserted wherever consonant clusters occur. We concur with Mbaga (2020) that words borrowed from Swahili and English often have vowels inserted within the noun to fit Kichonyi's phonological constraints. Consider the following examples.

Borrowed Word	**Source Word**	**English Gloss**
a) gilasi	*glasi*	a glass
b) si-kuli	*skuli*	a school
c) mu-tu	*m-tu*	a person

Also cross refer with example 28 in table 25 which shows Kichonyi nouns borrowed from English and Kiswahili for further illustrations.

Notice in the examples above that, the vowel high back vowel /u/, high front vowel /i/ and mid back vowel /o/**,** are very prominent on the vowel insertions occurring in borrowed words and are usually inserted where consonant clusters occur.

The rule for this process is as follows.

$$\Phi \longrightarrow [+\text{syllabic}] \,/\, [+\text{cons}\ [+\text{cons}]$$

The rule can be put in words as follows:

A vowel is inserted in the environment between consonants.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter we provide a discussion of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations on the study, centered on the morphological description of Kichonyi nouns. The application of Basic Linguistic Theory proved instrumental in identifying and describing Kichonyi nouns, analyzing the phonological factors affecting the singular and plural markers and examining the morpho-phonological processes involved in noun formation.

Discussion of the findings

The findings of this study were guided by three objectives. The first objective focused on identifying and describing the different types of nouns in Kichonyi. We found out that most Kichonyi nouns are nouns referring to humans, plants and objects, body parts and plants, inanimate objects, zero morpheme nouns, nouns denoting instruments, Diminutives, Abstract nouns, Infinitives, Locatives and Gigantic nouns. Nouns referring to people are created by attaching the prefixes [mu-] and [a-] and these are both Agent and Patient nouns. Nouns referring to plants and objects are formed from verbs using prefixes [mu-] and [mi-] together with names of fruit trees. Inanimate nouns are formed from verbs by adding the prefixes [chi] and [vi]. Zero morpheme nouns do not take any prefix. Nouns denoting instruments take the prefixes [lu] and [nyu]. Diminutives are created with the

prefixes [ka-] / [vi-]. Abstract nouns are derived from both adjectives and nouns by adding the prefixes [u]. Infinitives are also formed from verbs by adding [ku].

Locatives in Kichonyi take the prefixes [ha], [ku] and [mu]. Gigantic nouns, formed from adjectives and other nouns, use the prefixes [ri-] and [mi].

Similarly, Erin (2021), in a study on noun derivation in the Izere language also found that nouns can originate from verbs, adjectives and other nouns. We further revealed that Izere language, like Kichonyi language is a prefixal language. However, a key difference is that in Izere, nouns can also be derived from adverbs, something we did not observe in Kichonyi.

Additionally, we found that noun formation in Kichonyi involves several morphological processes such as compounding, reduplication, borrowing blending and clipping. Compound nouns are created by combining with another noun, or an adjective. These compounds are mostly endocentric, meaning their overall meaning is centered to the head noun. Borrowed nouns typically undergo vowel insertion to eliminate consonant clusters and maintain the preferred consonant-vowel (CV) structure. Reduplication, both the partial and full reduplication is also used in noun formation. Full reduplication involves repeating the entire word, often resulting in a change the word class while partial reduplication involves duplicating of a single syllable within the noun.

Blending is another process through which nouns are formed by merging the initial segment of one word with the final segment of another, usually to express possession. Clipping particularly fore-clipping, is also used in Kichonyi, where the initial part of a noun is omitted, and the remaining segment is retained to form the new noun. Mweshi's (2018) morphological analysis of Bisa nouns revealed similar processes such as compounding; reduplication, borrowing, and clipping were found to be also present in Kichonyi language. However, unlike what we have found in Kichonyi, the Bisa language includes additional noun formation methods such as affixation, which we did not observe in Kichonyi.

The second objective looked at the phonological factors that trigger the distribution of the singular and plural noun markers. It was observed that number is the most common grammatical category in Kichonyi nouns. Kichonyi language, like other Bantu languages, possesses systematic interactions between prefixes and roots during noun formation. These interactions may change either the meaning or the pronunciation of a noun. Furthermore, the interactions can affect either the meaning or the pronunciation of a noun. The resulting changes lead to varying phonological forms of nouns depending on their specific phonological environments. We have observed that when a root begins with a consonant, neither the prefix nor the root undergoes any change. However, if the root starts with a vowel, changes occur, particularly with prefixes [mu-], [lu-], [ku-], [mi-] and [vi-]. In the case of the prefix [mu-], the vowel /u/ changes to

/w/ and a similar change is observed in singular prefix [lu-]. For the prefix [ku-], the high-back vowel /u/ shifts to /p/, while in plural prefixes [mi-] and [vi-], the high front vowel /i/ changes to /j/. When forming nouns using the singular prefix [chi-] with roots that begin with vowels, the interaction between the prefix and root is affected leading to vowel harmonization to facilitate smoother pronunciation. Additionally, when forming diminutives and gigantic nouns, the affix [dzi-] is sometimes inserted between the class prefix and the root. In diminutives, this often adds pejorative sense, while in gigantic nouns; it conveys the idea of 'a large, unpleasant thing.' Midigo & Wambua (2024) in their study on morphological analysis of Dholuo number markers observed that plural number markers are irregular. This contrasts with our study which found that both consonants and vowels influence the formation of singular and plural noun markers.

The third objective was to establish the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns. We found several processes affecting both consonants and vowels including consonant weakening, glide formation, vowel insertion, deletion, nasalization, Homorganic nasal assimilation, Ganda law and labialization. We found that these processes occur in environments involving both vowel and consonants. Consonant weakening in Kichonyi has been seen to involve the alveolar stop /d/ in the agent nouns changing to the alveolar fricative /z/. In Kichonyi, nasalization occurs when a singular noun with the prefix [lu-] changes to its plural form. Hormoganic nasal assimilation in Kichonyi has shown the realization of the archiphoneme /n/ in different environment while Ganda law involves deletion and harmonization of the velar stop /g/ when it comes after a

nasal /n/. Labialization process also occurs in Kichonyi when the consonant /k/ precedes a round vowel.

Glides are formed both on stems and roots and primarily involving the glides /w/, and /j/ which typically appear before vowels. Like Kichonyi, the Luwanga language also demonstrates the presence of Homorganic Nasal Assimilation and Glide formation as part of its morpho-phonological processes, as highlighted in Mukanda's (2022) morphological analysis of Luwanga nouns and verbs using Lexical phonology. However, Mukanda's findings differ from those of our study, which additionally identifies other morpho- phonological processes such as voice assimilation and vowel height coalescence something we did not observe in the Kichonyi language.

Deletion affects consonants. Consonant deletion typically occurs at the beginning of words particularly in the formation of plural nouns.

Vowels insertion is common in borrowed words serving to break consonant clusters and preserve the preferred syllable structure. Our overall findings on objective three align with those of Mbaga (2020), who conducted a study on the phonology of Kichonyi. Although her research focused on phonology, it provided valuable insights into the morpho-phonological processes involved in noun formation, which is the focus of our current morphological study. These morpho- phonological processes serve to enhance ease and naturalness of pronunciation.

The study employed BLT framework for the description of the morphology of Kichonyi nouns and it proved to be a fitting framework for the study. The principles of BLT can apply to the description of Kichonyi nouns without difficulty.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has established that Kichonyi nouns are are nouns referring to humans, plants and objects, body parts and plants, inanimate objects, zero morpheme nouns, nouns denoting instruments, Diminutives, Abstract nouns, Infinitives, Locatives and Gigantic nouns and mostly formed from verbs, adjectives, and other nouns. Compounding, borrowing, reduplication, blending and clipping are also involved in the formation of Kichonyi nouns. Singular and plural noun markers are distributed under the influence of both consonants and vowel sounds.

The morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns are consonant weakening, nasalization homorganic nasal assimilation Ganda law, labialization, glide formation, deletion, and vowel insertion. These processes affect both vowels and consonants.

The findings in this study will add to the body of knowledge on Kichonyi morphology and support a deeper understanding of Bantu languages.

For scholars interested in Kichonyi, it will shed more light on the language's morphological features.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has focused on BLT as its framework in the morphological description of nouns in Kichonyi. It limited itself on types of nouns, distribution of singular or plural markers and the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of Kichonyi nouns. We therefore advise;

1. A thorough investigation of the morphological structure of verbs to provide a more comprehensive linguistic analysis.

2. More research can also be done on the syntax of Kichonyi sentences.

Declaration

This Research Dissertation is my original work and has not been presented in any other university or any other award.

Gift Ziro Mwatela **AG26/PU/36056/23**

Signature …… Date ……..…

Supervisors' Declaration

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the Candidate under our supervision.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late grandfather, Kalama Chigiri Burua 'Bambaya.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am truly grateful to God, the Almighty for the gift of life and his blessings this far I have reached. I deeply appreciate the efforts that my able supervisors have put to make sure that this study is successful: Dr. Elizabeth Munyaya and Dr. Violet Aura may God bless you dearly. I am also grateful to the lecturers in the department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature for ensuring that my academic journey was successful. You guided and shaped me in the field of linguistics. My sincere gratitudes to my classmates in M.A. English and Linguistics group, Apiny Abura, Desmond Tutu, Elizabeth Hinzano, Casty Kagendo and Salwa Abubakar; you were formidable. Thank you so much for being with me and make my academic journey successful. To my parents, Mwatela Kalama and Beatrice Nzale; you supported me both financially and spiritually.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the project: <a morphological description of nouns in Kichonyi> Name of the researcher: <Gift Ziro Mwatela>

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet Dated < february 2025 (<serial number>) for the study (< a morpho logical description of nouns in Kichonyi>). I have had the chance to read the information and ask questions about the study and am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to stop at any time, and I do not give a reason for doing so. I understand that if I ask to stop the study, my medical care and legal rights will not be affected in any way.

Occasionally an external regulator or funding body may ask to look at the data for this study to check that it is being run correctly.

I understand that relevant sections of information and data collected during this study, may be looked as part of the research. I give permission for my (Kichonyi words) data to be used for this purpose. I understand that my interview will be recorded.

I agree to take part in the above study.

_____ _____ _____

Name of participant date signature

Researcher to complete:

I have explained the information in this document and encouraged the participant to ask Questions and provided adequate time to answer them.

_____ _____ _____

Name of the researcher date signature Or person seeking consent

(If different from researcher)

ISSN No. 2454-6186 | DOI: 10.47772/IJRISS | Volume X Issue VI June 2026

Appendix Ii: A Map Showing Where The Achonyi Live

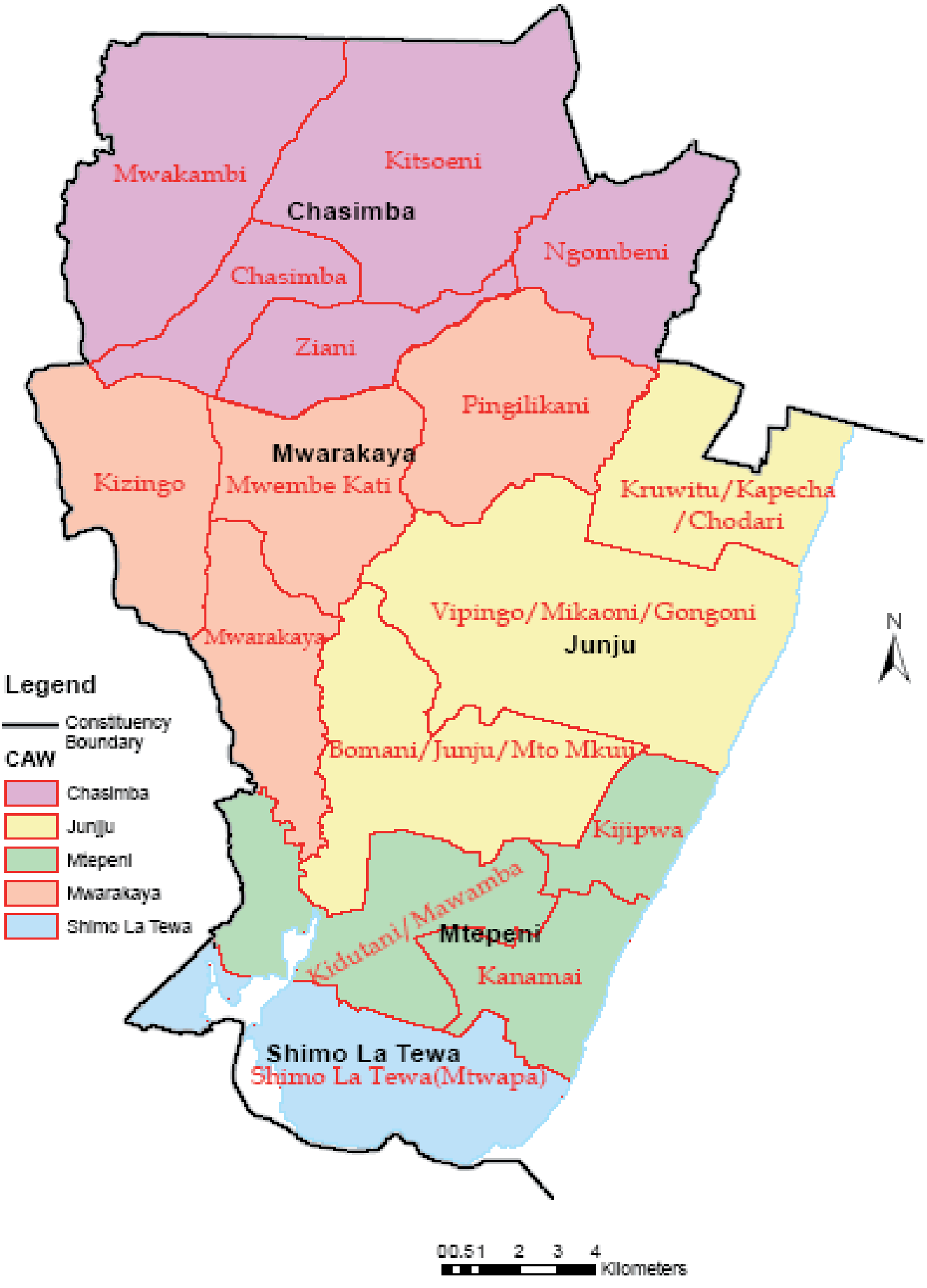

Figure 1: A map showing where the Achonyi live.

APENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome:

Thank for being part of this FGD; we appreciate your willingness to share your time and your valuable opinions, thoughts, and experiences.

Introductions:

Introduce the moderator and anyone else in the room who is not a participant, explain their role.

Purpose of the FGD:

We have asked to conduct these FGD to help find out more about the Kichonyi words. To do this, we need your input and want you to share your honest and open thoughts with us.

[To be clear, this is not an evaluation of your personal educational performance, and nothing said will be attributed to you or affects your family]

Ground rules

You do the talking

We would like everyone to participate

I may call on you if I haven't heard from you in a while

There is no right or wrong answers

Everyone's experiences and opinions are important

Speak up whether you agree or disagree.

We want to hear w wide range of opinions

What is said in this room stays here

Everyone should feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up- everything is said here is confidential and should not be repeated outside of this room

1. We will be recording this group

a. We are doing this to, so we accurately capture everything you say

b. No one will be identified in the name, you will all remain anonymous.

1. Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to people.

Nihadzira madzina matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganagomba ganahusu atu

Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to things.

Nihadzira madzina matsano ga Chichonyi ambago kuhusu vitu

Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to plants and vegetation and geographical features.

Nihadzira maneno matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganagomba kuhusu mazingira

Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to inanimate objects.

Nihadzira madzina matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganahusu vitu visivyo na uhai

Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to instruments.

Nihadzira madzina matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganagomba kuhusu vifaa

Give 5 nouns formed from verbs.

Nihadzira madzina ga Chichonyi ambago getengezwa kula pka maneno ga vitendo?

Give 5 nouns formed from adjectives

Nihadzira madzina ga Chichonyi ambago getengezwa kula pka maneno ga sifa?

Give nouns in Kichonyi formed by joining two or more words.

Nihadzira madzina matsano ga Chichonyi ambago getengezwa pka kuunganisha maneno mairi?

Give nouns in Kichonyi that were borrowed from Kiswahili and English?

Nihadzira maneno matsano ga Chichonyi ambago gehenda kuvoywa kuleza pka lugha ya Chiswahili na Chizungu?

Give nouns in Kichonyi that are formed through reduplication

Nihadzira maneno matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganatengezwa pka kuyira neno au sehemu ya neno

Give five examples of nouns formed through blending two words

Nihadzira maneno matsano ga Chichonyi ambago ganatengezwa pka kuunganisha sehemu za maneno mairi

Give five nouns formed through shortening of words

Nihadzira maneno matsano ga Chichonyi amabago ganatengezwa kutsupira ufupishaji wa maneno

Appendix V: Questionaire

The researcher is carrying a morphological description of nouns in Kichonyi with the aim of identifying nouns, describe what triggers the distribution of singular and plural markers and establish the morpho-phonological processes involved in the formation of nouns in Kichonyi. The findings of the study will assist to establish the condition that triggers the formation of Kichonyi nouns and their morph phonological alterations.

This is to kindly request you to fill all the sections of this questionnaire honestly and truthfully. Do not indicate your name.

A. Gender (i) Female [ ] (ii) male [ ]

B. Age (i) 18-25 (ii) 26-35 ( ) (iii) 36-45 ( ) ( ) Above 45 ( )

C. Education (i) Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] (iii) Tertiary [ ] (iv) University (v) other

D. Give 5 nouns in Kichonyi that refer to people.

(i)……

(ii)……..

(iii)……

(iv) ……

(v) ……

Give 5 nouns that refer to things.

i)……
(ii)……
(iii)……
(iv)……..
(v)……

Give 5 nouns that refer plants and vegetation and geographical features.

i)……

(ii)……
(iii)……
(iv)……..
(v)……

E. Give 5 nouns that refer to inanimate objects.

i)……
(ii)……

(iii)…….

(iv) …….
(v)……

F. Give 5 nouns that refer to instruments.

i)……
(ii)……
(iii)……
(iv)…….. (v)
…….

G. Give 5 nouns that refer to abstract ideas.

i)……
(ii)……

(iii)……
(iv)……..
(v)……

H. Give 5 nouns that are formed from verbs.

(i)……
(ii)……

(iii) …….
(iv)……..
(v)…….

I. Give 5 nouns that are formed from adjectives.

(i)……
(ii)……..
(iii)……..

(iv) ……..
(v)……

J. Give 5 example of nouns that are formed by joining two or more words.

(i)……
(ii)……..
(iii)……..
(iv)……..

(v)……

K. Give 5 examples of nouns that are borrowed from Kiswahili and English

(i)……..
(ii)……..

(iii) ……

(iv) …….
(v)……

L. Give 5 examples of nouns that are formed by repeating an entire word or part of a word.

(i)……..

(ii)……
(iii)……..
(iv)……

M. Give five examples of nouns formed through blending two words.

(i) ……..
(ii)……
(iii)……..
(iv)……

N. Give five nouns formed through shortening of words.

(i) ……..
(ii)……
(iii)……
(iv)……

… THANK YOU…

APPENDIX VI: A LIST OF KICHONYI WORDS AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

afuna	‘bite’
ahula	‘cut into two’
ara	‘advise’
ata	‘skin’
andika	‘write’
anika	dry’
anga	‘night run’
aza	‘think’
azo	‘thought’
awiza	‘help’
buruta	‘drag’
chambo	‘bait’
chunu	‘waist’
chala	‘finger’
chashiro	‘starter’
chigombero	‘microphone’
chibano	‘peg’
chilungiro	‘spice’
chifuniko	‘lid’
chirahu	‘shoe’
chikalango	‘frying pan’
chinolo	‘sharpening stone’
chitabu	‘book’
chilasi	‘class’
chumba	‘room’
chungwa	‘orange’
dakitari	‘doctor’

dzibwe	‘ipomoea batatas’
dzino	‘tooth’
dziwe	‘stone’
dzitso	‘eye’
dzambo	‘issue’
dzo	‘beautiful’
emba	‘sing’
enenda	‘go’
fidza	‘mix’
fidzo	‘mixers’
fuhi	‘short’
funika	‘seal’
gomba	‘speak’
gula	‘buy’
guza	‘sell’
gwarura	‘scratch’
handaweya	‘under pant’
heka	‘fetch’
henza	‘love’
henda	‘do’
hendo	‘doing’
henzo	‘love’
honda	‘pound’
inz’i chuma	‘iron fly’
jita	‘cook’
kala	‘stay’
kalo	‘place to stay’
kahoho	‘nice little child’
kakono	‘nice little hand’

kadziche	‘nice little woman’
kanju	‘cashew apple’
katabu	‘small book’
kasichana	‘tiny girl’
kenga	‘lie’
tsola	‘pick’
ologa	‘kill’
voya	‘pray’
vina	‘dance’
molagi	‘killer’
muchungwa	‘orange tree’
mujiti	‘cook’
mulume	‘man’
musaidizi	‘helper’
muvoyi	‘begger’
mwembe	‘mango tree’
musena	‘friend’
mujema	‘tapper’
mutu	‘person’
muhoho	‘young child’
mwana	‘child’
munazi	‘coconut tree’
mwenenzi	‘person who goes’
muche mudzo	‘beautiful woman’
muche muvyere	‘elder wife’
muzinzi	‘immoral person’
mkaza mwana	‘daughter-in-law’
mwanga	‘night runner’
mwanamukulu	‘the eldest child’

mwana paka	‘kitten’
mwanangonzi	‘lamb’
mwiya	‘thorn’
mwingo	‘flywhisk’
mwanya	‘gap’
muche muvyere	‘elder wife’
muvulana	‘boy’
musichana	‘girl’
mwanamuche	‘woman’
mwanang’ombe	‘calf’
mamevyala	‘mother-in-law’
mwanamutsanga	‘newborn’
munazi	‘coconut tree’
lua	‘flower’
lubao	‘piece of wood’
lubala	‘piece of ugali’
Ludata	‘cane’
lukohe	‘eye lash’
ludea	‘jaw’
ludago	‘weed’
lwangwa	‘dry part of an ocean’
lwalwa	‘grinding stone’
lwengu	‘pancreas’
ludodo	‘dry tree branch’
lukombe	‘nail’
lubala	‘piece of ugali’
lushero	‘broom’
lungo	‘winnowing tray’
lufidzo	‘stirring stick’

lwayo	‘foot’
lwago	‘step’
lupanda	‘branch’
lukombe	‘nail’
lukohe	‘eyelash’
lukanza	‘palm leaf’
lujere	‘hair’
ludea	‘jaw’
luvanzi	‘salary advance’
ribuzi	‘big ugly goat’
ridziche	‘big bad woman’
ridzitu	‘big bad person’
rihoho	‘big bad child’
shati	‘shirt’
shati tite	‘small shirt (s)’
sikiro	‘ear’
shera	‘sweep’
suruwale	‘pant’
tune	‘red’
tunga	‘compose’
uchoyo	‘selfishness’
udzo	‘beauty’
ufuhi	‘shortness’
utamu	‘sweetness’
utune	‘redness’
vidunga dunga	‘black jacks’
vunza pawa	‘thick porridge’
zinga	