

Beltes Academy

Comprehensive Conjunction Guide
English & isiXhosa (Izihlanganisi)

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Linguistic Overview & isiXhosa Grammar Rules

In isiXhosa, conjunctions are known as **izihlanganiso**. Unlike English conjunctions which function as separate independent words, isiXhosa izihlanganiso are highly dynamic. They interact closely with prefixes, subject concords, and can profoundly shift the verbal inflection (mood) of the secondary clause. Understanding how prefixes attach and how clauses switch moods is essential for natural synthesis.

Core Morphological & Syntactic Rules:

- **Vowel Elision and Coalescence:** Proclitic conjunctions like *na-* (and/with) blend directly into nouns. The vowel undergoes a fusion rule: *na-* + *umntu* becomes *nomntu* (and a person); *na-* + *abantwana* becomes *nabantwana* (and children); *na-* + *izinto* becomes *nezinto* (and things).
- **Subjunctive Mood Triggering:** Subordinating intent words expressing a purpose, wish, or sequence (such as *ukuze* - so that/in order that) require the trailing verb to transition into the **Subjunctive mood**. This means the terminal vowel of the verb root transforms from *-a* to *-e* (e.g., *sisebenze* instead of *siyasebenza*).
- **Participial/Situational Mood Triggering:** Conjunctions establishing situational timelines or conditional clauses (like *xa* - when/if, or *nangona* - although) shift the subsequent clause into the **Participial mood**. This alters subject concords, changing positive inflections and shifting negative structures radically (e.g., using negative prefix *nga-* instead of *ayi-*).

1. Coordinating Conjunctions (Izihlanganiso Zokungezelela)

English Conjunction	isiXhosa Conjunction
For (Reason)	Kuba / Ngokuba
And	Na- (Prefix) / Nabanye / Kunjalo nje
Nor	Ngaphandle / Kwaye engayi
But	Kodwa
Or	Okanye / Noma
Yet	Noko / Kodwa kunjalo
So	Ngoko / Ngoko ke

Examples & Parallel Translations:

- **For / Kuba:** We stayed indoors, for it was pouring rain outside. / Sahlala phakathi, **kuba** imvula yayina ngamandla phandle.
- **And / Na-:** He ordered a burger and a side of fries. / U-odole ibhaga **neetshipsi** (*na-* + *iitshipsi*).
- **But / Kodwa:** I wanted to go to the beach, but it started to storm. / Ndandifuna ukuya elwandle, **kodwa** kuqale

isitshingitshane.

• **Or / Okanye:** You can have hot coffee, or you can choose iced tea. / Ungasela ikofu eshushu, **okanye** ukhethe iti enomkhence.

• **So / Ngoko ke:** The store was closed, so we drove back home. / Isivenkile besivaliwe, **ngoko ke** sigoduke ngemoto.

2. Correlative Conjunctions (Izihlanganiso Ezisetyenziswa Ngababini)

English Conjunction	isiXhosa Conjunction
Both... and	Sombini... kunye / Kokubini... noku-
Either... or	Noba... okanye / Nokuba... nokuba
Neither... nor	Noba... namnye / Nakuba... noko engasekhoyo
Not only... but also	Ayisosiso kuphela... kodwa kunye ne-
Whether... or	Noba... okanye / Nokuba... okanye

Examples & Parallel Translations:

• **Both... and / Sombini... kunye:** Both the manager and the employee received a warning. / **Sombini** umphathi **kunye** nomsebenzi bafumana isilumkiso.

• **Either... or / Noba... okanye:** Either you finish your homework now, or you cannot watch TV. / **Noba** ugqiba umsebenzi wesikolo ngoku, **okanye** akuyi kuyibukela i-TV.

• **Neither... nor / Noba... namnye:** Neither the public nor the local government supported the tax. / **Noba** luluntu **namnye** urhulumente wasekhaya akaxhasanga le rhafu.

• **Not only... but also / Ayisosiso kuphela:** She is not only talented but also smart. / **Ayisosiso kuphela** ukuba unesiphiwo, **kodwa kunye** neengqondo ezibukhali.

3. Subordinating Conjunctions (Izihlanganiso Ezixhomekekileyo)

English Conjunction	isiXhosa Conjunction
Because	Kuba / Ngenxa yokuba
Since (Cause)	Njengoko / Ngenxa yokuba
Although / Even though	Nangona / Nakuba
If / When	Ukuba / Xa
Unless	Ngaphandle kokuba
While / Whereas	Ngeli lixa / Ngoxa / Kanti
After	Emva kokuba
Before	Phambi kokuba
Until	Ude / Fram kuse kwixesha lokuba
So that / In order that	Ukuze (+ Subjunctive verb mood)

Examples & Parallel Translations:

- **Because / Kuba:** The game was postponed because the field was flooded. / Umdlalo umisile **kuba** ubala beluzaliswe ngamanzi.
- **Although / Nangona:** Although he was exhausted, he stayed up late. / **Nangona** ebediniwe kakhulu, ulalile emva kwexesha.
- **If / Ukuba:** If it rains tomorrow, the picnic will be cancelled. / **Ukuba** iyana imvula ngomso, ipikhiniki iya kurhoxiswa.
- **Unless / Ngaphandle kokuba:** You will not pass unless you study. / Awuyi kuphasa **ngaphandle kokuba** uyafunda.
- **So that / Ukuze (Subjunctive changes -a to -e):** Work hard so that you pass. / Sebenza nzima **ukuze** uphase (from uphasa).

4. Conjunctive Adverbs (Izicwangcisi Magama Ezidibanisayo)

English Conjunction	isiXhosa Conjunction
Therefore / Consequently	Ngoko ke / Ngako oko
However / Nonetheless	Noko ke / Nangona kunjalo
Moreover / Furthermore	Ngaphezu koko / Kanjalo
Otherwise	Kungenjalo

Examples & Parallel Translations:

- **Therefore / Ngoko ke:** The company lost a contract; therefore, profits dropped. / Inkampani ilahlekelwe yikhontrakthi; **ngoko ke**, ingeniso yehle kakhulu.
- **However / Nangona kunjalo:** I respect your opinion; however, I disagree. / Ndiyaluphonononga uluvo lwakho; **nangona kunjalo**, andivumelani nawe.
- **Moreover / Ngaphezu koko:** The phone has a great camera; moreover, the battery lasts long. / Le fowuni inekhamera egqwesileyo; **ngashezu koko**, ibhetri ihlala ixesha elide.
- **Otherwise / Kungenjalo:** Back up your files; otherwise, you risk losing data. / Gcina iifayile zakho kwenye indawo; **kungenjalo**, usengciphekweni yokulahlekelwa zezo nkcukacha.