

Noun classes, genders, declensions in
Grassfields Bantu – preliminary
generalisations on their dynamics
(with a focus on the Ring subgroup)

Berlin, 2018

Program

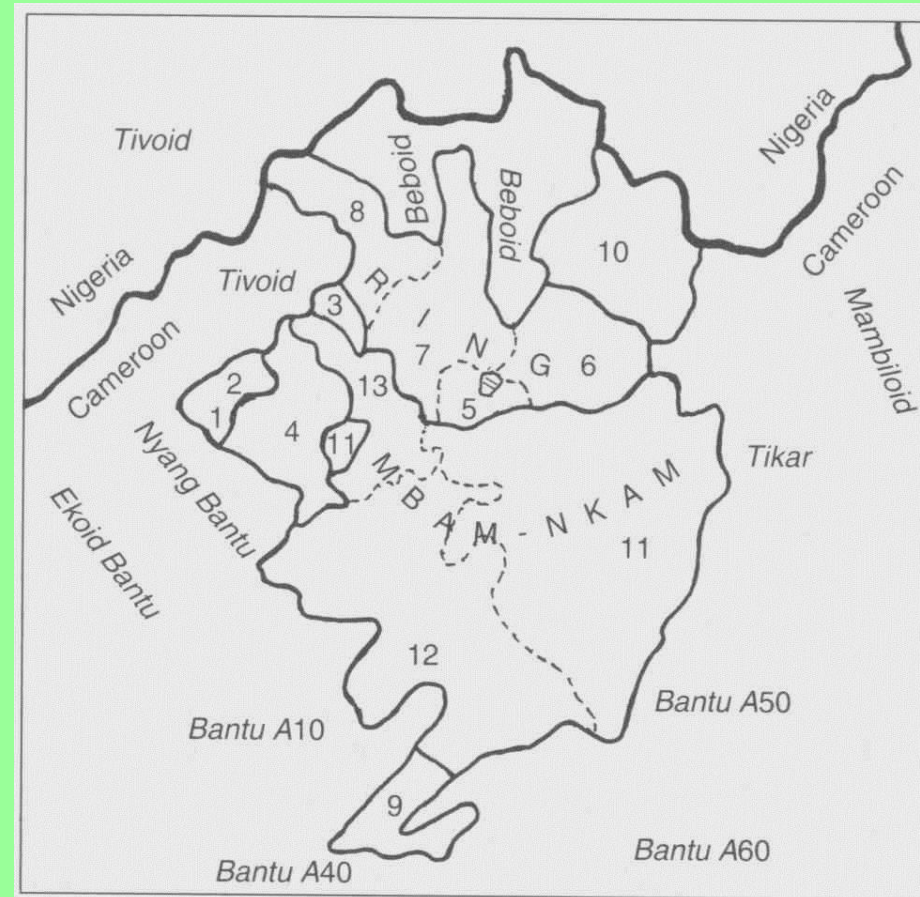
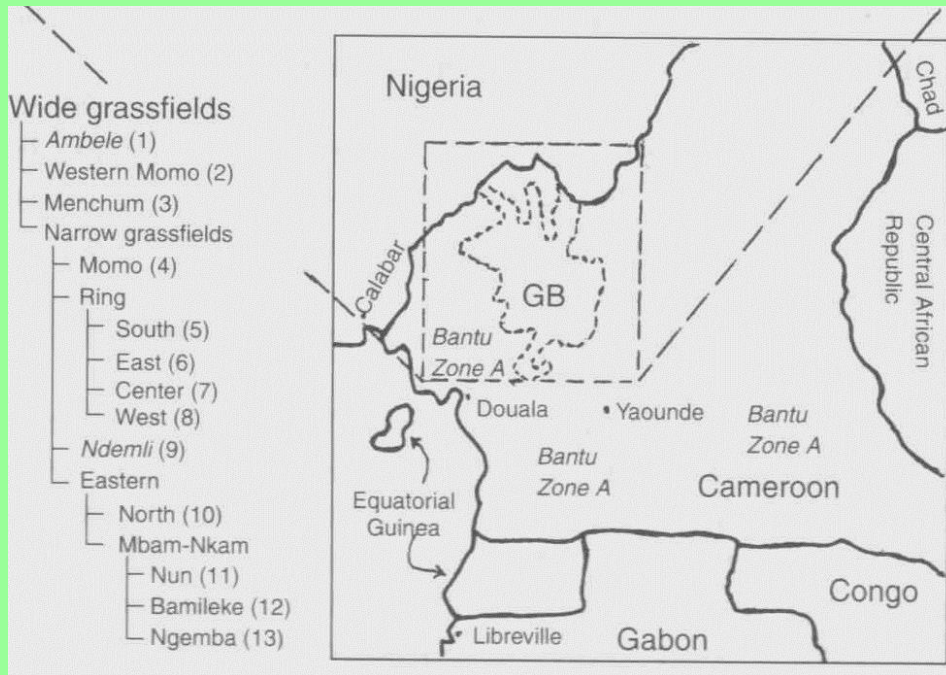
Dynamics of noun class systems in Ring languages (relevance for Benue Congo / Niger Congo)

- (a) Laboratory for the study of transition from prefix marking to enclitic noun class marking**
- (b) Adnominal class coding strategy and its dependency on morphosyntactic and pragmatic conditions**
- (c) Reduction and levelling of noun class systems**
- (d) Tonal relics of a prior augment**
- (e) Incipient grammaticalisation of numeral classifier systems**

Grassfields of Cameroon



Grassfields Bantu



West Ring:

Aghem, Bu, Isu, Weh, Zoa

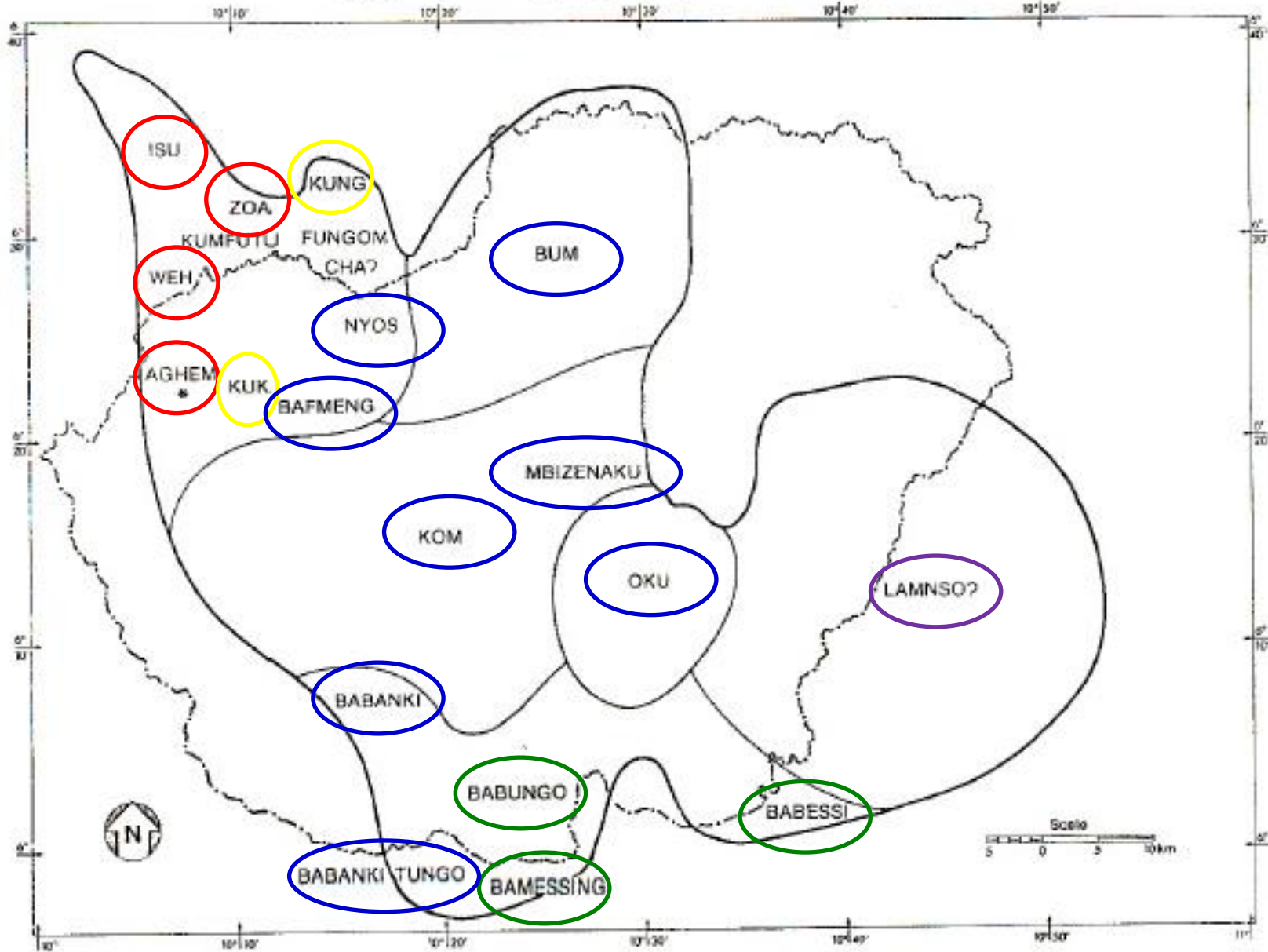
Central Ring: Babanki, Bum, Kom, Kuk, Kung, Men, Oku

South Ring: Bamunka, Kenswei Nsei, Vengo, Wushi

East Ring: Lamnso'

Ring

Languages of the Ring subgroup of Western Grassfields Bantu



West Ring

Central Ring

?WR/CR?

East Ring

South Ring

Bantoid: internal classification

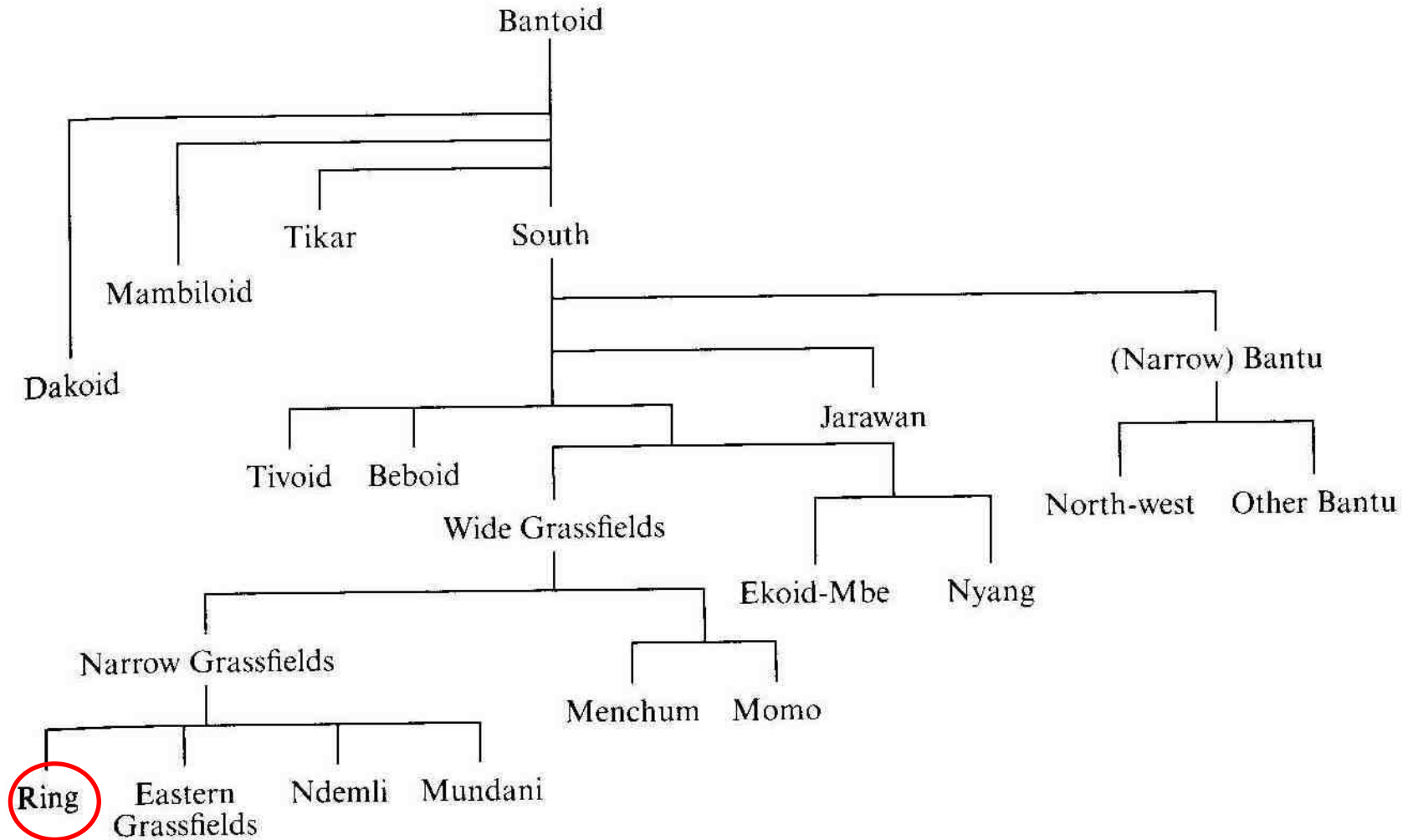


Fig. 2.15. Classification of Bantoid languages.

Ring: tone patterns in monosyllabic nominal roots

	(a) H ₁ (HH _o)	(b) H ₂ (HL _o)	(c) L ₁ (LH _o)	(d) L ₂ (LL _o)
	‘leg (tibia)’	‘arm’	‘spear’	‘thigh’
Aghem	<i>kí-fwé</i>	<i>kí-kwé`</i>	<i>é-γóη</i>	<i>kí-bî</i>
Isu	<i>ú-fwé</i>	<i>ú-kwé</i>	<i>ī-wūη</i>	<i>ká-bî</i>
Zoa	<i>ká-fwé̃</i>	<i>ká-kwé̃</i>	<i>í-γóη̃</i>	<i>ká-bêi</i>
Kung	<i>kā-fwéi</i>	<i>kā-kpáí</i>	<i>ī-γóη̃</i>	<i>kā-bê</i>
Kuk	<i>kā-fáí</i>	<i>kā-kpáí</i>	<i>īwóη̃</i>	<i>kā-bâi</i>
Men	<i>ā-fyé(i)n</i>	<i>ā-kó(i)n</i>	<i>ē-γóη̃</i>	<i>ā-pî</i>
*PR	<i>*ká-fwén´</i>	<i>*ká-kwén`</i>	<i>*í-γòη´</i>	<i>*ká-bèi`</i>
PB	<i>-píndí</i>	<i>*-kónò</i>	<i>*-gòηgá</i>	<i>*-bèdè</i>

Ring: syntagmatic aspects of noun class agreement

Kung (CR):

class 10 agreement of the noun *s̄-B̄* ‘goats’ in complex NPs:

<i>B̄</i>	<i>s-ū̄ŋ</i>	<i>s̄</i>	<i>yâ?l̄</i>	<i>s-ê</i>	<i>s̄</i>	<i>t̄e</i>
10.goats	10-POSS.1sg	10	big.PL	10-D1	10	five

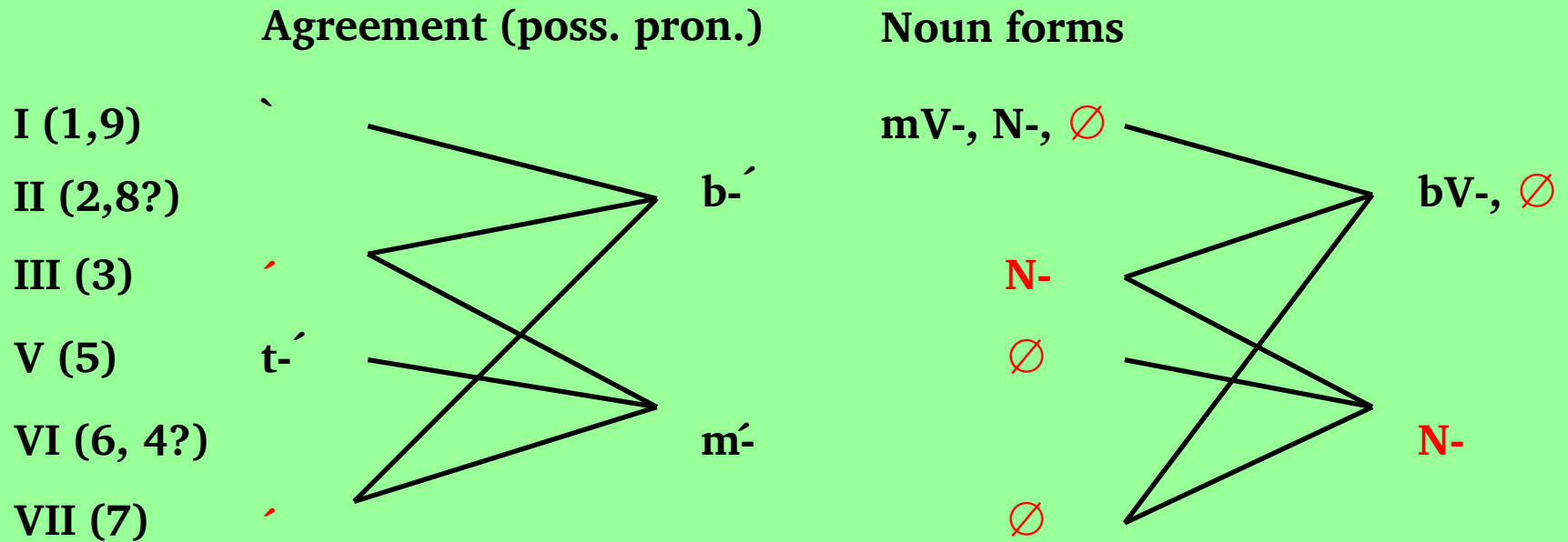
‘these five big goats of mine’:

Reconstructed noun class formatives: Proto-Eastern Grassfields vs. Proto-Ring (cum Momo)

	Proto-Eastern Grassfields		Proto-Momo and Ring	
	NP _x	CP _x	NP _x	CP _x
1	Ṃ-	ù-	ù(n)-	ù-
2	bḥ-	bḥ-	bḥ-	bḥ-
3	Ṃ- (3a: ì-)	ú-	ú-	ú-
4	-	-	í-	í-
5	lì-	lí-	í-	í-
6	(= 6a)	(= 6a)	á-	gá-
6a	mḥ-	mḥ-	mḥ-	mḥ-
7	à-	í-	kí-	kí-
8	bì-	bí-	bí-	bí-
9	Ṃ-	ì-	ì(N)-	ì-
10	Ṃ-	í-	í(N)-	Cí-
13	-	-	tí-	tí-
19	fḥ-	fḥ-	fí-	fí-

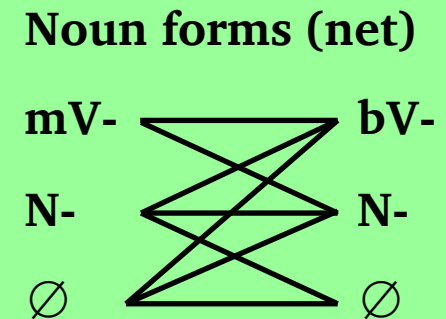
adapted from Watters (2003: 240)

Bali-Mungaka (Nun): reduced gender system

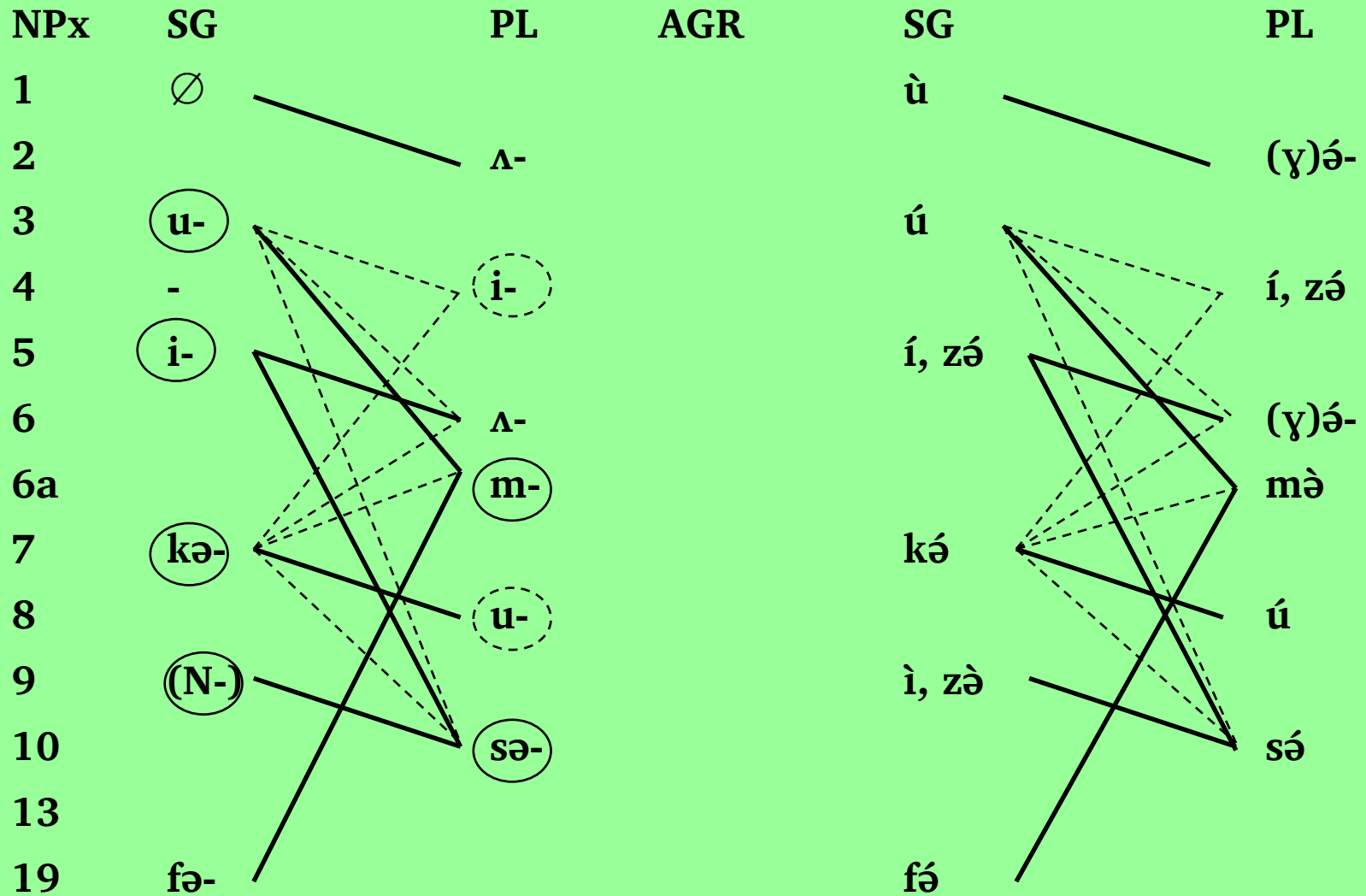


Remarks: based on one agreement target only (pronominal possessive), nominal possessives: animacy agreement, demonstrative: number agreement

Distinction of 3 vs. 7 only based on NPx (3: N-, 7: zero)



Kung (CR): noun class / gender system



Kung: overview of noun class prefixes and concords

	NP _x	PossP _x	DemP _x	AM	SM	DET/OB
1	∅-	w-̀	w-	à (< ù?)	ù	ù
2	ɬ-	ɣ-´	ɣ-	(ɣ)á	ɣe´	ɣə ~ ə
3	u-	w-´, ɣ-´	w-	ú	ú	u
4	i-	z(ə)-´	z-	í	í	i
5	i-	z(ə)-´	z-	í	zá ~ í	i, zə
6	ɬ-	ɣ(ə)-´	ɣ-	á ~ á	ɣá ~ á	ɣə ~ ə
6a	m-	m(ə)-̀	m-	m̀	m̀	m̀
7	kə-	k(ə)-´	k-	ká	ká	kə
8	u-	w-´ ~ ɣ-´	w-	ú	ú	u
9	∅-, (N-)	z(ə)-̀	z-	ì	zà, ì	ì
10	sə-	s(ə)-´	s-	sá	sá	sə
19	fə-	f(ə)-´	f-	fá	fá	fə

Remarks: 4 in both genders marginal; almost full convergence of 2 = 6 (exception; SM)

Contentwise, minor gender 7/6 (and 7/4?) very stable across Ring

Kung: contents of genders

1/2: person, wife, husband, child, friend [\neq chief, slave, infant, witch]

3/6a: body, tail, belly, throat; fire/gun, medicine, bed, ceiling/roof [...]

5/6: bean, pumpkin, wound, eye, tooth, spear, egg, stone, name, matter
[...]

5/10: feather, wing, root, leaf, pumpkin leaf, cutlass, axe, charcoal,
locust, he-goat [...]

7/8: head, bone, ear, tongue, chair, pan, rat, cocoyam, compound, slave,
witch/wizard/witchcraft [...]

9/10: animal/meat, buffalo, cow, goat; hoe, rope, pot, maize plant,
mountain, chief [...] [$<$ loanwords]

19/6a: tree/wood, mat, knife, bird, belt, thorn, antelope, infant [...];
[+ DIM]

7: fog, dew, dust; chest, ground [...]

6a: water, oil, raffia palm wine, blood, bile, pus, spittle, soot, brain,
cornflour, marrow/fat [...]

7/4: leg, arm, thigh, jaw

7/6: hand, foot

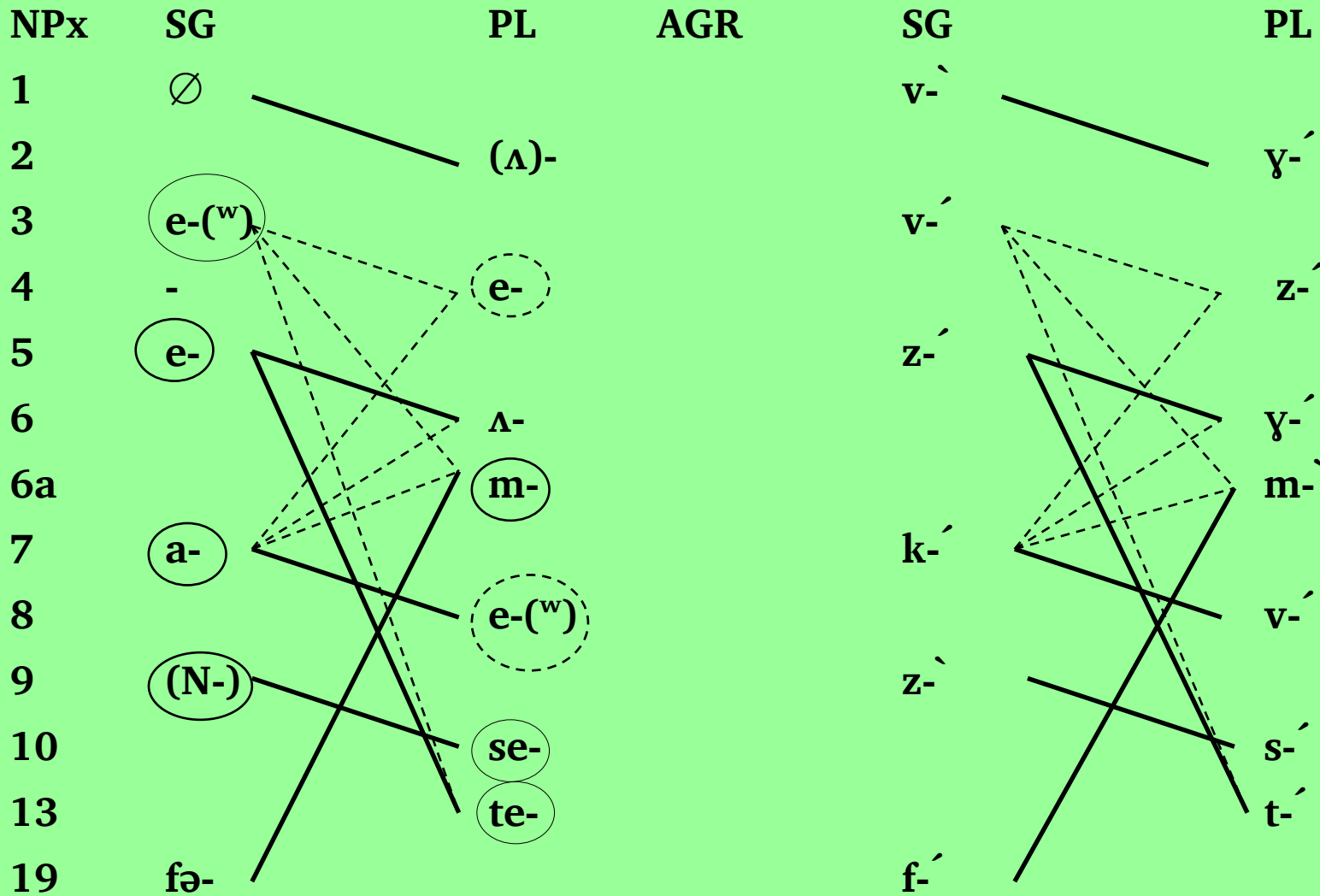
[3/10, 3/4, 3/6, 7/6a, 7/10, 3=8, 5=4, 9, 10]

Kung: alternative plurals

singular	alternative plurals
<i>ūsóm</i> ‘palm tree’ (3)	<i>āśóm</i> (6), <i>sāsóm</i> (10)
<i>ūlîŋ</i> ‘bamboo’ (3)	<i>īlîŋ</i> (4), <i>sālîŋ</i> (10)
<i>ūmê</i> ‘neck’ (3)	<i>īmê</i> (4), <i>m̄mê</i> (6a)
<i>ītōŋ</i> ‘navel’ (5)	<i>ātōŋ</i> (6), <i>sātōŋ</i> (10)
<i>kāfwéi</i> ‘leg’ (7)	<i>īfwéi</i> (4), <i>āfwei</i> (6)
<i>kābôŋ</i> ‘jaw’ (7)	<i>ībôŋ</i> (4), <i>sābôŋ</i> (10)
<i>kālŭ?</i> ‘place’ (7)	<i>sālŭ?</i> (10), <i>ūlŭ?</i> (8) ‘distant places’

Observation: 4, 6 > 10

Men (CR): noun class / gender system



Men: contents of genders

1/2: person, wife, husband, child, friend (~10), father [\neq chief, slave, witch, co-wife]

5/6: bean, pumpkin, breast, eye, tooth (~13), spear (~13), egg, stone (~13), name (~13), matter [...]

5/13: tail(3), throat, neck (3), brain, feather, wing, root, leaf, charcoal, he-goat, cola nut, banana, cutlass [...]

7/8: head, bone, ear, tongue, pan, rat, cocoyam, compound, slave, witch/wizard/witchcraft [...]

9/10: animal/meat (~13), buffalo, cow, goat; hoe, axe, rope, pot, maize plant, mountain, locust, chief, co-wife [...] [< loanwords]

19/6a: tree/wood, mat, knife, bird, belt, thorn, cap [...] [+DIM]

6a: water, oil, raffia palm wine, blood, pus, spittle, urine, cornflour [...]

3/6a: body, belly/abdomen, fire/gun, medicine, bed, money

3/13: boundary, bridge, ford, place, birdlime

7/6a: ground, wind, farm, forest, (wall), (compound)

7/4: leg (~13), arm (~13), thigh (~8~13), jaw (~8~13)

7/6: hand, foot

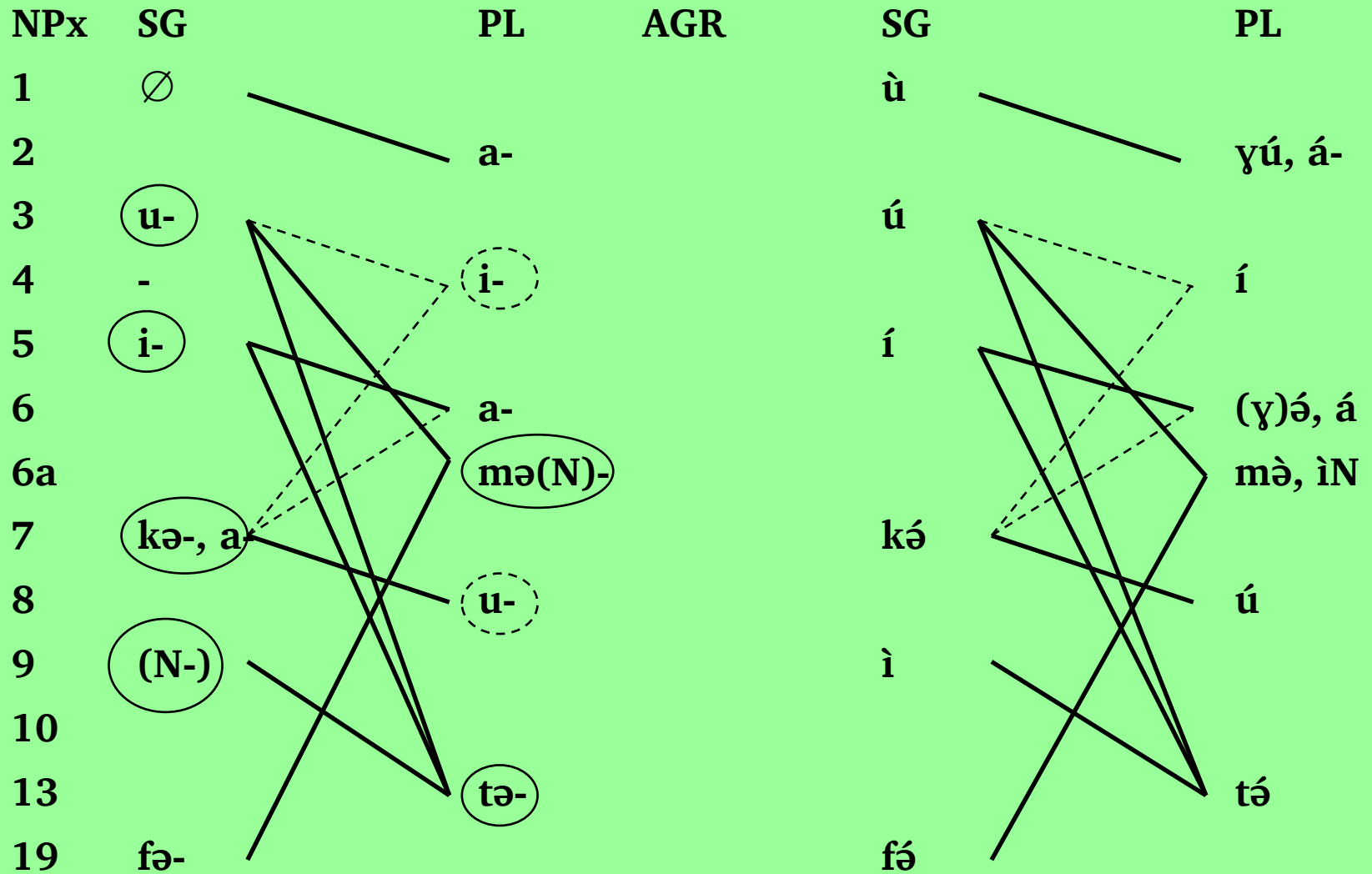
Men: initial consonant mutations maintain class contrasts 4, 5 vs. 3, 8

e- (4) < PR **i*

e-(^w) (8, 3) < PR **u*

‘fish’		<i>è-mb^wð̂</i> [<i>è-mb^yð̂</i>] (7: <i>à-mbð̂</i>)
‘part, piece’		<i>ē-p^wâs</i> [<i>ē-p^yâs</i>] (7: <i>ā-pâs</i>)
‘dish, plate’		<i>ē-k^wáη</i> [<i>ē-k^wáη</i>] (7: <i>ā-káη</i>)
‘bone’		<i>ē-γ^wίf</i> [<i>ē-γ^wóf</i>] (7: <i>ā-γίf</i>)
‘fruit’		<i>ē-t^wám</i> [<i>ē-t^wóm</i>] (7: <i>ā-tám</i>)
‘law’		<i>ē-l^wâη</i> [<i>ē-l^wâη</i>] (7: <i>ā-lâη</i>)
‘mushroom’		<i>ē-z^wά?</i> [<i>ē-z^wó?</i>] (7: <i>ā-zά?</i>)
‘bamboo trunk’		<i>ē-s^wί?</i> [<i>ē-s^wú?</i>] (7: <i>ā-sί?</i>)
‘arm’	<i>ē-kóin</i> (7: <i>ā-kóin</i> , 13: <i>tē-kóin</i>)	
‘leg’	<i>ē-f^yéin</i> (7: <i>ā-f^yéin</i> , 13: <i>tē-f^yéin</i>)	
‘jaw’	<i>ē-pôη</i> (7: <i>ā-pôη</i> , 13: <i>tē-pôη</i>)	
‘thigh’	<i>ē-pî</i> (7: <i>ā-pî</i> , 13: <i>tē-pî</i>)	
‘bridge’		<i>ē-l^wô</i> (13: <i>te-lê</i>)
‘belly’		<i>ē-nd^wô</i> (6a: <i>m-ndê</i>)

Isu (WR): noun class / gender system



Isu: contents of genders

1/2: person, wife, co-wife, husband, child, infant, friend, father, chief [≠ slave, witch]

3/6a: neck, belly/abdomen, fire/gun, medicine, bed, bridge, boundary [...]

3/13: hill, mountain, quarter, plot of ground [some trees] [...]

5/6: bean, pumpkin, breast, eye, tooth, mouth, knee, spear, egg, stone, name, matter, palm tree, maize plant, cola nut, crab (globular seeds / fruits) [...]

5/13: feather, wing, root, leaf, axe, charcoal, locust, he-goat, fish, plain (non-globular parts of plants) [...]

7/8: head, bone, ear, tongue, jaw, pan, rat, ram, cocoyam, hoe, rope, cap, compound, slave, witch/wizard/witchcraft (< owl), place, forest, (some trees) (augmentative) [...]

9/13: animal/meat, buffalo, cow, goat, sheep; skin; pot, wind, ground (< loanwords) [...]

19/6a: tree/wood, mat, knife, bird, banana, belt, cutlass [...] [+DIM]

6a: water, oil, raffia palm wine, (pus), spittle, corn beer [...]

3/4: leg, arm, tail, buttock, body, farm, mortar, bamboo

7/4: thigh

7/6: hand, foot

3 = 8: money, ashes, marrow/fat, laziness [*14?]

5: rust, clay, death

13: blood, soot, honey

Isu: subclasses of 6a

Classes 6a, 6b and 6ab

6a	<i>ḥ-γàm</i> (6a) ‘mats, wickerwork frames’ < SG <i>fá-γâm</i> (19)
6b	<i>má-nîa</i> (6b) ‘bellies, wombs, pregnancies’ < SG <i>ú-nîa</i> (3)
6ab	<i>màm-νλlè</i> ‘fires; guns’ < SG <i>ú-νά · λά</i> (3)

NPx 6ab *məN-* as result of combination of *mə-* and *N-*:

ḥ-kwò? (6a) ‘bridges’ < SG *ú-kwô?* (3): DIM *mà-ḥ-kwò?* (6ab) ‘little bridges’

mà-ḥ-kòḥò (6ab) ‘little ground squirrels’ < *fá-kôḥò* (19) < *úkóḥ* (3/4) ‘ground squirrel’

ḥ-kòḥò m-ĩ ‘little ground squirrels (defocalised)’ [**kòḥò m-ĩ*]

Isu: derivative properties of noun classes

Subclass 6ab for distributive plurals

(a) *ntwà* *má* *bv̀̀* *wíy* *á'ná* *mám-b̀̀l̀̀*
9.pot P0.FOC fall crash to 6ab-pieces
'The pot has fallen and broken in pieces.'

(b) *ntwà* *má* *bv̀̀* *wíy* *á'ná* *ú-b̀̀t* *ù* *b̀̀*
9.pot P0.FOC fall crash to 8-pieces 8 two
'The pot has fallen and broken in two.'

7/8 augmentative: *ká-ηwə̃n* (7/8) 'big bird' (< *fá-ηwá'ní* (19/6a)), *ká-tíá* (7/8) 'log' (< *í-tíá* (5/6~13) 'rib'), *ká-bwām* 'big half calabash' (< *bwām* (9/13) 'half calabash, cup')

3: *úffú* 'friendship' (< *ffú* 'friend'), *údzô* 'little quantity of pus' (< *m̀̀ndzù* (6ab) 'pus')

5: *í-bwô?* 'drilling' (< *bwô?* 'bore, drill'), *í-mwô* 'living' (*mwô* 'live, stay')

7: *ká-bwô?* 'hole' (< *bwô?* 'bore, drill'), *ká-mwô* 'home' (*mwô* 'live, stay')

6a: *m̀̀n-sĩ* 'tears' (< *ĩsí* (5/6) 'eye'),

19: *fá-mwĩ* (19/6a) 'drop of water' (< *mwĩ* (6a) 'water')

Semantic cores of genders across WR/CR

- 1/2 PERSON, CHILD
- 3/4 BODY, TAIL, THROAT; BAMBOO
- 3/6a BELLY, FIRE(/GUN)
- 5/6 TOOTH, EYE, BREAST, EGG, NAVEL NOSE; NAME, SPEAR
- 5/10 KOLA NUT, FEATHER
- 5 RAIN
- 6a OIL, WATER
- 7/4 ARM, LEG, THIGH, JAW?
- 7/6 HAND, FOOT
- 7/8 HEAD, EAR, TONGUE, BONE; MUSHROOM, FUFU; RAT, SNAIL, COCKROACH; PALM-NUT, COCOYAM; SPOON, PAN/DISH
- 9/10 BACK, HORN, SKIN/HIDE; CLOUD; WATER BUFFALO, GOAT, SHEEP
- 19/6a TREE, BIRD, MAT [general DIM]

Affiliation of HAND, FOOT, ARM, LEG across Ring noun class systems

Distribution of 7/6 and 7/4~3/4 vs. other

		HAND	FOOT	ARM	LEG	THIGH	JAW
WRing	Aghem	7/6	7/6	7/4~6	7/4	7/4	7/8
	Bu	7/6	7/6	7/4	7/4	7/4	7/8
	Isu	7/6	7/6	3/4	3/4	7/4	7/8
	Weh	7/6	7/6	7/4	7/4	7/4	7/8
	Zoa	7/6	7/6	7/4~6	7/4~6	7/6~8	7/8
CRing	Babanki	7/6	7/6	5/6	3/6	7/8	7/8
	Bum	7/8	7/8	3/6	3/4	?	7/8
	Kom	7/8	7/8	3/6	3/6	7/8	[7/8]
	Kuk	7/6	7/6~8	7/4~7/8	7/4	7/4	7/4
	Kung	7/6	7/6	7/4	7/4~6	7/4	7/4
	Men	7/6	7/6	7/4~13	7/4~13	7/4~13	7/4~13
	Oku	7/6	7/6	?3/4	3/4	7/8	7/8
SRing	Bamunka	7/8			9/13		
	Kenswei						
	Vengo						
	Wushi						
ERing	Lamso'						

Gender 3/4

West Ring 3/4 vs. Central Ring 3/6a ~ 3/13

	Proto-Ring	West Ring	Central Ring
TAIL	*ú-kùn´ (3/4)	3/4 (BU, ZOA: 3/6a)	3/13 (BAB, BUM, MEN, OKU), 3/6a (KUK, KUNG), 3/6 (KOM)
BODY	*ú-ywìn´ (3/4)	3/4 (ZOA: 3/6a)	3/13 (BAB), 3/6a (MEN, KUK, KUNG), 3/4 (KOM, OKU)
NECK	*ú-mî (3/4 ~ 3/6a)	3/4 (AGH), 3/6a (BU, ISU, WEH, ZOA)	3/4 (KUK, KUNG), 5/13 (BAB, BUM, MEN), 3/6 (KOM)
THROAT	*ú-tóη (3/4)	3/4	3/6a (KUNG), 5/13 (MEN), 7/8 (BAB, BUM, OKU), 5/6 (KOM)
BAMBOO	*ú-lîη (3/4)	3/4 (BU: 5/13)	5/13 (BAB, MEN), 5/10 (KUK, KUNG), 3/4 (BUM, KOM, KUNG, MEN, OKU)

Stable gender affiliation across non-cognates in Ring

	Proto-Ring	non-cognate forms (innovations?)
BONE (7/8)	* <i>ká-yúp</i> ´ (7/8)	BAB (CR): <i>kà-kwáη</i> (7/8)
BRIDGE (3/6a)	* <i>ú-lûə</i> (WR: 3/6a; CR: 3/13)	ISU (WR): <i>ú-kwô?</i> (3/6a)
SPOON (7/8)	* <i>kà-ntäd</i> ~ <i>kà-ntàs</i> (7/8)	ISU (WR): <i>ká-kpá?á</i> (7/8)
FEATHER (5/13)	* <i>í-gvôd(lə)</i> (5/13)	BAB (CR): <i>ə-nìnə</i> (5/13)
SKIN/HIDE (9/10)	* <i>∅-gùə</i> (9/10)	MEN (CR): <i>∅-pfî</i> (9/10)
WATER BUFFALO (9/10)	* <i>∅-fùη</i> (9/10)	OKU (CR): <i>∅-jal</i> (9/10)

Noun class isomorphs: West Ring vs. Central Ring

	West Ring	Central Ring
10	-	+ (suffix: BAB, KOM, OKU)
13	+	+ (but KUK/KUN: -)
7 NPX	<i>kə-</i> (vs. allophone <i>a-</i>)	<i>a-</i> (BUM/KOM/MEN) vs. <i>kə-</i> (rest)
TAIL/BODY	3/4	3/13, 3/6a
ARM/LEG/THIGH	7/4~6 (but Isu 3/4)	diverse (but KUK/KUN/MEN 7/4)
NPx in N2	+	-

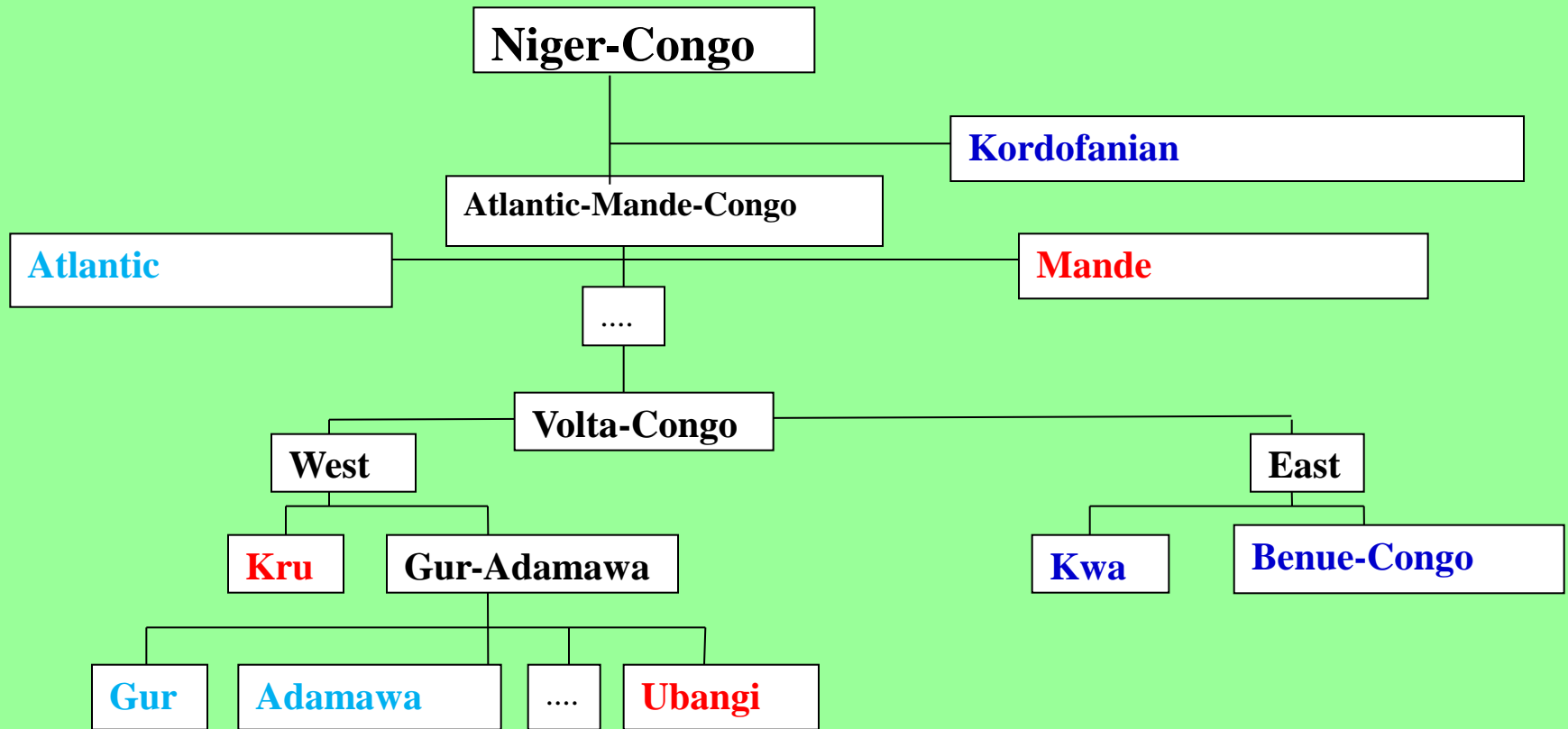
Isu: NPx allomorphy: 7 *kə-* vs- *a-* (in N2 position): *ká-yú* ‘toilet’ vs. *á-yú* (N2)

à ndzárí †ná †ndíá mífáa mí á†n-á-yú
 IS mess.up keep who 6ab.faeces 6a.OF at-7-toilet
 ‘Who has messed up the toilet with liquid faeces?’

Noun class isomorphs across Grassfields Bantu

Eastern Grassfields	Momo, Ring
nasal C in NPx of 1 and 3	No nasal in NPx of 1 and 3
No contrast of 6 vs. 6a: both have a nasal in NPx and CPx	Distinction of 6 vs. 6a: nasal only in NPx and CPx of 6a
Nasal C in NPx of all nouns of gender 9/10	Absence of nasal NPx in some nouns of gender 9/10
Absence of classes 4, 13, 19 (exception Ngemba: 19)	Presence of classes 13, 19 throughout, 4 present in some
all NPx have L tone	Some NPx have H tone
no nominal class suffixes	Suffixes -si and / or -ti in classes 10 and 13
Classes 6~6a or 2 are used as general plural class	Classes 10 or 13 are used as general plural class

Distribution of adnominal noun class marking strategies across branches of Niger-Congo



Legend: **prefixes**, **older prefixes (vestiges) and younger suffixes**, **suffixes**

Diachronical development of noun class marking

Restructuring of adnominal class marking (à la Greenberg 1978):

noun class prefixes (NP_x)

- > NP_x + enclitic class marked “articles”
- > ~~NP_x~~ + enclitic class marked “articles”
- > noun class suffixes

Aghem (West Ring): noun class prefix deletion

class	A-form: NP _X -R	B-form: NP _X -R = CL-X	gloss
1	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	child
2	<i>á-wé</i>	<i>wé</i> γ -X	children
3	<i>ó-kóʔ</i>	<i>kóʔ</i> \downarrow w-X	ladder
4	<i>é-kóʔ</i>	<i>kóʔ</i> \downarrow z-X	ladders
5	<i>é-lím</i>	<i>lím</i> z-X	yam
6	<i>á-lím</i>	<i>lím</i> γ -X	yams
7	<i>kí-fú</i>	<i>fú</i> k-X	rat
8	<i>ó-fú</i>	<i>fú</i> w-X	rats
9	<i>bvú</i>	<i>bvú</i>	dog
10	<i>tí-bvú</i>	<i>bvú</i> \downarrow t-X	dogs
19	<i>fí-nwín</i>	<i>nwín</i> \downarrow f-X	bird
6a	<i>ń-nwín</i>	<i>nwìn</i> m-X	birds

Aghem (West Ring): noun class prefix deletion

Aghem: NPx deletion in the modified head noun *fĩ-nwín* ‘bird’
(Hyman 1979: 27)

- (a) *nwín* [↓]*f-áŋá* ‘my bird’
- (b) *nwín* *fĩ* *dú*[↓]*ú* *fó* ‘big bird’
- (c) *nwín* [↓]*f-ín* ‘this bird’
- (d) *nwín* [↓]*fĩ* [↓]*wé* ‘bird’
- (e) *fĩ-nwín* *fĩ-mò?* ‘one bird’

Isu (West Ring): noun class prefix deletion

NPx deletion in the modified head noun *fá-kâ?* ‘tree’

(a) *kâ?* *f-ám* ‘my tree’

(b) *kâ?* *f-à* ‘this tree’

(c) *kâ?* *fâ nê f-ĩ* ‘big tree’

(d) *kâ?* *fâ yáa[†] f-í* ‘which tree?’

(e) *kâ?* *f-áa[†]bú* (< *kâ?* *fá ká[†]bú*) ‘tree of the bark ordeal’

(f) (*fá-*)*kâ?* *fâ-mò?* ‘one tree’

(g) *íkhí í fá-kà?* ‘stump of a tree’

retention of vocalic NPx’s in modified head nouns, e.g. *áwá* (2) ‘children’

(a) *á-wá á[†]wé à bÈÈ* ‘two children of her’s’

(b) *á-wá á[†]wé[†]yá à bÈÈ* ‘these two children of her’s’

(c) *á-wá á[†]wé à nêe yà à bÈÈ* ‘these two big children of her’s’

(d) *á-wá á[†]wé à nêe yĩ à bÈÈ* ‘two big children of her’s’

Isu (West Ring): noun class prefix deletion

class	A-form: NP _X -R	B-form: [NP _X -]R = CL-X	gloss
1	[[↓]]wá[n]	[[↓]]wá	child
2	á-wá, á-wí	á-wá y-X	children
3	ú-súm	ú-súm w-X	farm
4	í-súm	í-súm y-X	farms
5	í-lám	í-lám y-X	yam
6	á-lám	á-lám y-X	yams
7	ká-fú	fú k-X	rat
8	ú-fú	ú-fú w-X	rats
9	[[↓]]bvó	[[↓]]bvó	dog
13	tá-bvó	bvó t-X	dogs
19	fá-ηwá [↓] ní	ηwá [↓] ní f-X	bird
	fá-kâ?	kâ? f-X	tree
6a	mà-ηwàní	ηwàní m-X	birds
6b	η-kà?	η-kà? m-X	trees

West Ring: Comparison of Aghem vs. Isu A- and B-forms

NCL	PWR NP _x	A-Form (Aghem, Isu)	Aghem B-form	Isu B-form
1	∅, ù-	R	R	R
2	á-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
3	ú-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
4	í-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
5	í-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
6	á-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
7	ká-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X
8	ú-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X
9	∅, ñ-	R	R	R
13	tá-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X
19	fá-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X
6a, 6b	mà-	NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X
		NP _x -R	∅-R CP _x -X	NP _x -R CP _x -X

West Ring: progressive loss of nominal prefixes in B-forms

Structure of nominal prefixes in B-form	Stage 1	Stage 2 (Isu, Weh)	Stage 3 (Aghem)
CV-	NP _x -R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X	∅-R CP _x -X
V-, N-		NP _x -R CP _x -X	

West Ring: defocalisation of nouns triggers NPx loss

Isu: **A-form** (*tá-bvó, ká-fú*) vs. **B-form** (*bvó t-í, fú k-î*) of the nouns ‘dogs’ (13) and ‘rat’ (7) under conditions of syntactically triggered (de)focalisation

(a) *fú* *kí* *kò?* *tà-bvó* ‘The rat saw (the) DOGS.’
rat 7 see 13-dogs

(b) *bvó* *tí* *kò?* *kà-fú* ‘The dogs saw a/the RAT.’
dogs 13 see 7-rat

West Ring: defocalisation of nouns triggers NPx loss

Isu: B-forms of *kábá?* ‘rope’ under conditions of past perfective focus (P0 *má`*, P1 *mâa*, P2 *má'á*) and predication focus (*ηwð*)

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|--|
| (a) | <i>má</i> | <i>má</i> | <i>sè</i> | <i>bá?</i> | <i>kí</i> | | ‘I HAVE pulled the rope.’ |
| | 1sg | P0.F | pull | rope | 7 | | |
| (b) | <i>má</i> | <i>mâa</i> | <i>sè</i> | <i>bá?</i> | <i>kí</i> | | ‘I HAVE pulled the rope (yesterday).’ |
| | 1sg | P1.F | pull | rope | 7 | | |
| (c) | <i>má</i> | <i>má'á</i> | <i>sè</i> | <i>bá?</i> | <i>kí</i> | | ‘I HAD pulled the rope (long time ago).’ |
| | 1sg | P2.F | pull | rope | 7 | | |
| (d) | <i>má</i> | <i>kî</i> | <i>sèe</i> | <i>ηwð</i> | <i>bá?</i> | <i>kí</i> | ‘I WILL pull the rope.’ |
| | 1sg | F1 | pull.IPF | CF | rope | 7 | |

Isu: A-form vs. B-form of *ká-bá* (7) ‘fufu’: affirmative vs. negative

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) | <i>má</i> | <i>mê</i> | <i>ñî</i> | <i>ká-bá</i> | <i>zî'</i> | | ‘I ate fufu today.’ |
| | 1sg | P1 | eat | 7-fufu | today | | |
| (b) | <i>má</i> | <i>kê</i> | <i>ñî</i> | <i>bá</i> | <i>kí</i> | <i>zî'</i> | ‘I did NOT eat fufu today.’ |
| | 1sg | NEG | eat | fufu | 7 | today | |

Isu: noun class prefixes vs. noun class enclitics

class	A-form: NP _x -R	B-form: [NP _x -]R = CL-i	gloss
1	[¹]wá[n]	[¹]wá	child
2	á-wá, á-wí	á-wá yí	children
3	ú-sóm	ú-sóm wí	farm
4	í-sóm	í-sóm yí	farms
5	í-lám	í-lám yí	yam
6	á-lám	á-lám yí	yams
7	ká-fú	fú kí	rat
8	ú-fú	ú-fú wí	rats
9	[¹]bvó	[¹]bvó	dog
13	tá-bvó	bvó tí	dogs
19	fá-ηwá ¹ ní	ηwá ¹ ní fí	bird
	fá-kâ?	kâ? fî	tree
6a	mà-ηwàní	ηwàní mí	birds
6b	η-kâ?	η-kâ? mì	trees

Model of gender / class marker renewal (Greenberg 1978)

Restructuring of adnominal class marking (à la Greenberg 1978):

Demonstrative

- > Stage I article (definite article)
- > Stage II article (definite/indefinite article)
- > Stage III loss of functional contrasts, occurrence with
practically all Ns (gender marker, classifier)

Isu: “out-of-focus” enclitic as determiner

Determining enclitics with *ká-lóʔó* (7/8) ‘place’

- (a) OF: *lóʔó k-í* (out of focus form)
- (b) DEM: *lóʔó ʔk-á* (**k-í*) ‘this place’ (D1), *lóʔó ʔk-í* (**k-í*) ‘that place’ (D2)
- (c) DEF-0: *lóʔó ká ʔté k-í* ‘the (aforementioned) place’
DEF-1: *lóʔó ká ʔté ʔk-á* ‘this (aforementioned) place’
DEF-2: *lóʔó ká ʔté ʔk-í* ‘that (aforementioned) place’
- (d) ?DEF: *lóʔó ká ʔà k-à* ‘the (aforementioned) place’
- (e) INDEF (specific or unspecific): *lóʔó kà lí k-í* ‘some place, another place, a certain place’
- (d) OTHER: *lóʔó kà lí ʔk-á* ‘the other place’
- (e) SAME: *lóʔó kà móʔó k-í* ‘the same place’
- (f) (*ká-*)*lóʔó ká mɔ̀* (**k-í*) ‘one place’ vs. *ú-lóʔó ú bèe* ‘two places’

General observations

Liminal position of Kuk and Kung between West Ring and Central Ring: absence of contrast 10 vs. 13 (WR), presence of 10 (CR)

Stability of minor genders with semantically robust core:

7/6 (HAND, FOOT), 7/4 (ARM, LEG, THIGH, ?JAW)

Trend towards loss of 4 (> Eastern Grassfields)

Derivational functions of noun classes: DIM, (AUG), deverbal (action, result, abstract quality, instantiation of quality)

Incipient stage of transition from adnominal prefix marking to enclitic (> suffix?) marking of noun classes

Sensitivity to information structure: determiner enclitic

Importance of tonal class marking: tone of NPx (H vs L) > relic of augment, tone of agreement markers: L (1, 9, 6a) vs. H (rest)

Zòṅà kà nées kìy!



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