THE NOUN CLASS SYSTEM OF MMEN

by

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DEDICATION

To my beloved uncle, Akem Peter
Agha-a of blessed memory. He left this world in June 1990.

We loved you, and never shall have
Memories more than those to your credit.
Yet God, whose love and will reign supreme,
Loved you more and His will had to be done.
May your soul find in His eternal home,
Everlasting rest.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A work of this nature could never have been done single-handedly.

I owe my profound gratitude, first to God, who in His love and mercy not only gave me life but also guidance to live to produce a work of this calibre. Praised be His name.

I also owe my gratitude to the following people for their invaluable contribution.

- My supervisor, Dr. Carl Ebobisse, who despite other commitments, took time off to read, advise and encourage me.
- Mr. Tamani Piuss for his reading, criticism and encouragement.
- My late Uncle Akem Peter Agha-a who showed me the light by seeing me through to the university. Although he has not lived to reap the fruits of his labour, his kindness and love for me remain invaluable. May God bless his soul.
- Mr. Sadomvouo Etienne who sacrificed time not only to read sections of this work, but also provided me with documents for consultation.
- All the staff in S.I.L. for their hospitality and cooperation.
- The family of Gwellem Sylvester in Yaounde for giving/shelter as well as moral and material support.
- The family of Shola Hosea Waven in Wum for their unflinching moral and material support.
- My great friend Dr. Wimogo Buba for his constant encouragement. Despite the crisis, he was kind enough to help type out this work.
- Miss Moge Judith for her company and relentless encouragement.
- My informants Ashui Christie and Ndong Gabriel who despite the lack of motivation, gave me the information necessary for this work.
All friends and relatives whose names do not appear here, but who in one way or the other helped me in achieving this lofty goal. May they find here a sign of gratitude.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS.

A  Adjective
DEM Demonstrative Pronoun
Poss Possessive Pronoun
Num Numerals
V  Vowels
e.g. For example
i.e. That is
Syll Syllabic
ant Anterior
Cor Coronal
Fig Figure
Art Articulation
VL Voiceless
VD Voiced
Cons Consonantal
Ex. Example
P.S. Préfixe substantivé
ASS.M. Associative Marker
/.../ Phonetic data
/.../ Phonemic data
(α) Plus or minus
(β) Word boundary
+ Morphemeboundary
pl plural
sing singular
C consonant
NS Near Speaker
NL Near Listener
Tones

/ or H  High tone
— or M  Mid tone
\ or L  Low tone
\ or LH Rising tone
^ or HL Falling tone
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CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to the noun class system of Mmen. The chapter essentially focuses on the objectives of this study, the field work and methodology and analytical methods as well as the geo-historical situation of Mmen. The genetic classification of Mmen is also presented to enable the reader acquaint himself with the family and group of languages to which Mmen belongs.

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The aim of this research endeavour is to attempt a detailed analysis of the noun class system of Mmen. Discussions will centre first on the various noun classes and their respective prefix markers. Secondly, the singular-plural relationship (gender) between different classes will be discussed. Lastly, the concord system, which involves the agreement between noun class and other grammatical categories like adjectives, determiners, numerals, etc will be treated. The importance of this research lies in the fact that the product will hopefully:

i) Provide data for designing primers to be used in teaching and learning the Mmen language,
ii) Lay a foundation for an effective study of the syntax of the noun phrase in Mmen, and
iii) Add more to general linguistic knowledge by contributing to the process of describing cameroonian languages. If these goals are attained, it is hoped, the process of describing and standardising Cameroonian languages will be sped up.

1.2. GEO-HISTORICAL SITUATION.

Mmen is spoken in Wum Central sub-division in Menchum
Division by the people of Mmen or Bafmeng. Mmen is located to the south east of Wum central sub-division on the road to Fundong (capital of Fundong sub-division) in Boyo Division. Dialects of Mmen include Cha?, Nyos, Kuk and Kung.

According to Agha Grace (1987), Mmen has a population of about sixty thousand inhabitants. Like the rest of the region of the North West province, Mmen has farming as its principal occupation. The people of Mmen carry out principally subsistence agriculture, cultivating crops like cocoyams, bananas, maize etc. Their sole cash crop is coffee and it is not even produced in large quantities. With the infiltration of Muslims into the area, part of the male population has embarked on cattle rearing.

Apart from farming, the economy of Mmen has also seen the great influence of inter-tribal trade. The people of Mmen trade with their neighbours like Weh, Wum, Kom, Bum etc mostly in foodstuffs especially maize and groundnuts which are abundant in the area. The people of Mmen sell a significant proportion of their crops to the Muslims who prefer looking after cattle to working on the farm. The 1991 land confrontation between the two groups of people have caused the hither-to intimate relations between the Muslims and the people of Mmen to dwindle considerably.

The speakers of Mmen are usually referred to as Mmen or Bafmeng. However, they seem to prefer Mmen to Bafmeng. According to information gathered on the field, when the Germans first arrived Mmen before the First World War they brought along Bali people who served as interpreters. The Bali people referred to Mmen as "Bafmeng". "Ba" in Bali probably means "people" and "Bafmeng" therefore means "people of Mmen". If this information is true, then it could be concluded that the Bali vocabulary played a vital role in modifying the name of this region. On the field, many people expressed the wish to go back
to their original name—"Mmen". This wish owes much to the historical and cultural attachment that the people have to the name "Mmen".

Mmen owes its origin to the historical movement that brought them to their present site. To them, "Mmen" comes from the word "Mweng" which means "to wade ones way through grass". This explains how the people came to settle on the present site; the place was complete bush and they had to wade their way through this bush. In the course of this movement, they first settled in Tsute in Mbonge near Nyos. From here they moved to Nde-te, then to Nde-wum and finally to Mweng.

According to Nkwi (1982), Mmen falls among the patri-groups where succession is through uterine lines, that is, a person is succeeded at death by a blood brother or a sister's son. According to him, Mmen which falls under the chop group, came to the present site as a result of the same migration movements that brought Kom, Isu and Bafut to their present site. All neighbouring tribes and villages of Mmen are believed to have immigrated from somewhere.

1.3. Mmen and her Neighbours.

Mmen is bounded to the north by Bum, to the south by Kom and Babanki and to the north east by Oku and Aghem. A lot of cultural and linguistic similarities exist between Mmen and her neighbours. Culturally, the similarities have come as a result of ancient inter-tribal wars, trade and even marriages that have led to people moving into other tribes either as slaves captured in wars or just to satisfy the wish to marry outside one's tribe. Linguistically, the Mmen language and her neighbours share some degree of mutual intelligibility. This is especially the case with Kom, Bum and Aghem. In the case of Kom and Mmen for instance, it was realised that this similarity is very
pronounced at the level of lexical items as these examples below show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex.</th>
<th>Mem</th>
<th>Kom</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ſǐkā?</td>
<td>ſǐ + kā</td>
<td>'tree'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ſéʔin</td>
<td>ſé + in</td>
<td>'kang'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ſéʔiŋ</td>
<td>ſé + iŋ</td>
<td>'song'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ſéʔtām</td>
<td>ſé + tām</td>
<td>'fruit'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ſéʔtāmūʔ</td>
<td>ſé + tāmūʔ</td>
<td>'cat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ſéʔgwaʔli</td>
<td>ſé + gwaʔli</td>
<td>'book'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ſéʔgīn</td>
<td>ſé + gīn</td>
<td>'girl'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ſéʔge</td>
<td>ſé + ge</td>
<td>'trouble'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>mmūl</td>
<td>mmūl</td>
<td>'sivelling'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>mmo</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td>'water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ſéʔdōŋ</td>
<td>ſé + dōŋ</td>
<td>'horn'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ſéʔbōŋ</td>
<td>ſé + bōŋ</td>
<td>'potato.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>pōm</td>
<td>bōm</td>
<td>'build'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>sām</td>
<td>sām</td>
<td>'transfer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>tum</td>
<td>tum</td>
<td>'send'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY.

1.4.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

In the treatment of the data collected for this work, the structural approach of data analysis was employed. In this respect, the researcher was interested in finding out the various sound components that combine to form words. Consequently, words were broken up into morphemes (i.e. stems and affixes). With the words broken up into stems and affixes, these two levels were examined and the relationship between them explained. Commenting on the analysis of words, Nida (1949 p.382) notes that: "Morphemes are obtained by the comparison of different forms."
Where explanation to phonological phenomena were necessary, the generative approach was applied. This approach has the advantage that, it does not only explain the changes that occur in a word but also draws significant linguistic generalisations by providing rules that capture the changes that occur in the sounds and words of a language.

1.4.2. METHODOLOGY.

To obtain data for this project, the "Ibadan Word List of 400 Basic items" containing 249 nouns was used. However, owing to research imperatives, this list was modified such that in all, a total of 400 nouns was obtained. The data elicitation procedure consisted in eliciting direct translational equivalents in Mmen on the list. The list also contained other lexical categories such as verbs, adjectives, demonstratives etc that were collocated with the headnoun in order to determine the concord system.

Language helpers contacted here in Yaounde were all natives of Mmen who had spent most of their life in Mmen. The old and young as well as the educated and uneducated were contacted for data elicitation. The main informant Ndong Gabriel, aged 23 was at the time of this research resident in Yaounde. His mastery of English and a slight knowledge of Kom, the researcher's mother tongue, was of great advantage.

The main medium of communication on the field was English since it was the code shared by researcher and informants. At times, however, it became very imperative to use Pidgin English especially when the informant was not very literate.

In analysing the data collected, the Kadima (1969 p.82) criteria of noun classification was exploited. He holds that the existence of classes can be determined by considering con-
In analysing the data for this work, sometimes it became necessary to look at the semantic content of words. But it must be noted here that semantic content used to be a major criterion for determining class but today it is no more a major criterion since it is now common to find nouns with different semantic contents in the same class.

1.5. **GENETIC CLASSIFICATION.**

Mmen is a Grassfield Bantu language belonging to the Niger-Kordofanian family. Under the Grassfield Bantu languages, Mmen belongs to the Western Grassfield and particularly to the Ring group that covers areas of Bui, Mezam, Dongo-Mantung and Menchum Divisions. The Ring group is itself further divided into west, centre, east and south languages. In this further distribution, Mmen belongs to the centre languages.

In his classification of the Niger-Kordofanian languages, Grimes (1984) classifies the Ring group under the Bantu family as follows:

"Trois éléments sont pris en considération ici pour déterminer l'existence d'une classe: 1° S'il y a une différence dans leurs accords, 2° Si, en cas d'identité d'accords, leurs ps et appariements sont simultanément distincts. En d'autre termes, deux classes n'en forment qu'une si leurs accords sont identiques, sauf lorsque leurs ps et leurs appariements sont différents."
Meanwhile, *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun* classifies the Ring languages under Grassfield Bantu; a sub-group of Bantu as follows:

```
Niger - Kordofanian
  \downarrow
Niger - Congo
  \downarrow
Benue - Congo
  \downarrow
Bantoid
  \downarrow
Bantu
  \downarrow
Ring
  \downarrow
Mmen
```

Fig. 1

```
Benue - Congo
  \downarrow
Bantoid
  \downarrow
Bantu
  \downarrow
Grassfield Bantu
  \downarrow
Ring
  \downarrow
Mmen
```

Fig. 2.
The classification of *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun* is preferable because it gives more detailed information about the Ring group as the diagram below illustrates:

```
-8-

The classification of *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun* is preferable because it gives more detailed information about the Ring group as the diagram below illustrates:

```

**SOURCE:** ALCAM 1983

**Fig. 3**
RING LANGUAGES

SOURCE: ALCAM 1983 p. 397

map 3
1.6. OUTLINE OF WORK.

This project is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter presents the objectives and significance of this research endeavour, the geo-historical situation of Mmen, genetic classification and scope and methodology. The chapter ends with an outline of the entire work.

Chapter two treats the sound system of Mmen. This is an attempt by the researcher to review the related literature of Mmen. In this connection, consonants, vowels, tones and syllable structure of words have been reviewed.

Chapter three deals with the noun prefixes of Mmen. In this chapter the researcher attempts to discuss in detail the prefixes of the various classes.

Chapter four is concerned with the concord system. This chapter highlights the elements that mark agreement between the headnoun and its satellites such as numerals, possessives, demonstratives, adjectives etc. Chapter five examines gender and semantic content of Mmen nouns. Here each class has been further divided into groups of nouns that have the same semantic content. Chapter six which is the last, is the conclusion. It is a general summary of what has been treated in this project. The results of this research and suggestions for further research are also presented in this chapter.
CHAPTER TWO : THE SOUND SYSTEM OF Mmen.

2.0. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter reviews the sound system of Mmen. Infact, phonology does not constitute a major topic of discussion in this work. The chapter is only intended to acquaint the reader with the phonological aspects to be encountered in the course of this work. In this respect, particular attention will be paid only to a review of consonants, vowels, tones and syllable structure of words.

2.1. SOUND SYSTEM OF Mmen.

The sound system of Mmen consists of 27 consonants, 9 vowels as opposed to 28 consonants and 8 vowels according to Agha (1987 p.33,58) and five tones. This section will be devoted to a review of these segments and any new findings will be indicated.

2.1.1. CONSONANTS.

As mentioned above, Mmen has a total of 27 consonants as exemplified below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme (IPA)</th>
<th>Grapheme</th>
<th>Mmen Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>ñpu</td>
<td>'dog'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>ñbêblê</td>
<td>'pain'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bv</td>
<td>bv</td>
<td>bvaf</td>
<td>'ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pf</td>
<td>pf</td>
<td>ñpfà</td>
<td>'fainting fit'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 f</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>ñfu</td>
<td>'medicines'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>ñvain</td>
<td>'child'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m ñp</td>
<td>'one'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The voiceless velar fricative ːXː found in Agha's list of consonants was not attested in the data collected for this work. Agha has it in one word only ːShː meaning people. In this work, the voiced velar fricative ːgː was found in the place of ːXː in ːShː meaning 'people'. The occurrence of ːgː instead of ːXː in ːShː is justifiable because it is a common phenomenon for sounds to be strengthened intervocally. In addition, ːgː is widely attested in Mmen as the examples below illustrate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex: 2.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ːSyː</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ːSyː'm'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ːSyː'in'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Below is a chart containing Mmen consonants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Art</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Pre-Palatal</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
<th>Labiovelar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VL Oral Stop</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL Fricative</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL Affricate</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner of Art</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.

2.1.2. **CONSONANT MODIFICATION.**

Few cases of consonant modification exist in Mmen. These are palatalization, labialization, aspiration and homorganic nasal assimilation.

i) **Palatalization:** Sometimes in Mmen, it happens that the vowel feature of highness [^
high^], is superimposed on a preceding consonant. This superimposition only takes place in the environments of high vowels as seen in the examples below:

4  ꝏ📧  ꝏ鸨 'vein'
5  ꝏ鸨 'jealousy'
6  ꝏ鸨 'facces'
7  ꝏ鸨 'chameleon'
This process can be represented by the following rule.

PR 1:  \[ C \rightarrow C^+ \]

ii) **Labialization:** It happens too, that the vowel quality of lip-rounding \( C^+ \) can be superimposed on a consonant in the environment of - high vowels eg.

```
Ex. 4.  Phoneme | Grapheme | Mmen Example | Gloss
1 tw       | tw       | itwâs        | 'spoons'
2 kw       | kw       | ikwûm        | 'crabs'
3 gw       | gw       | ëgwâp        | 'seed'
4 lw       | lw       | ëlwoûfî      | 'palm fronds'
```

The labialization process can be captured by the following rule.

PR 2  \[ C \rightarrow C^w \]

iii) **Aspiration:** This is a process by which the consonant feature of fricative constriction at the glottis \( C^? \) is superimposed on a consonant at morpheme boundary as indicated by the examples below:

```
Ex. 5.  Phoneme | Grapheme | Mmen Example | Gloss
1 ph       | ph       | ëphâp        | 'compound'
2 ph       | ph       | ëphâp        | 'futher'
3 kh       | kh       | ëkhêp        | 'boundarystem'
4 kh       | kh       | ëkhêkêhê    | 'fly'
```

This process is captured by the following rule:

PR 3  \[ \sqrt{c} \rightarrow C^? \]

\[ \sqrt{-voice -cont} \rightarrow C^? \]
iv) Homorganic nasal assimilation: In this process, a nasal consonant /N/ takes up the features of the following oral consonant. It must be noted here that although syllabic nasals are attested in classes 6, 6a and 9, this assimilation process is only attested with class 9 nouns as illustrated below:

Ex. 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex.</th>
<th>Vowel in Mmen</th>
<th>Mmen Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>m - yif</td>
<td>'breast-milk'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ćfēnē</td>
<td>'boil' (noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ę</td>
<td>ćlē</td>
<td>'cutlass'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>ćkwālā</td>
<td>'prostitute'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Agha's (1987) list of vowels the central high vowel \( /\check{e}\) is conspicuously absent. From the data collected for this work, the impression got is that she must have replaced \( /\check{e}\) with the central mid-high vowel \( /\varepsilon/\). But as the examples below illustrate, the two vowels are distinct phonemes.

Ex. 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ãkêm</td>
<td>'crab'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ãkêm</td>
<td>'windingsheet'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ëpë</td>
<td>'pit'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ëpë</td>
<td>'camwood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ëlê</td>
<td>'wine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ëlê</td>
<td>'foam'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above exemplification, one realises that the occurrence of \( /\check{e}\) and \( /\varepsilon/\) is contrastive, thus resulting in a change in meaning. The conclusion therefore is that they are two different sounds.

These 9 vowels can be represented in a chart as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FRONT</th>
<th>CENTRAL</th>
<th>BACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID-HIGH</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ë</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID-LOW</td>
<td>ŋ</td>
<td>ë</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>ë</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5.
2.1.4. TONES.

Tone is an important aspect of language study, especially Bantu languages. According to Wiesemann, Ursula et al (1983 p.85) tone is defined as follows:

"Le ton est la hauteur relative de la voix pendant l'exécution d'un son. D'où l'emploi du terme "musical" pour le déterminer."

From this observation, it is clear that tone deals with musical height. This musical height marks lexical opposition i.e; it helps in drawing distinctions between words. This view is again shared by Wiesemann, Ursula et al (1983, p.90) in the following words:

"Sur le plan lexical, le ton participe à la signification d'un mot du fait qu'il entretient une opposition significative avec les autres mots du lexique de la langue."

This opposition is illustrated below in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex.9</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ndum</td>
<td>'vagina'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ndum</td>
<td>'road'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ndso</td>
<td>'horn'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ndso</td>
<td>'potato'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ndso</td>
<td>'moon'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ndso</td>
<td>'beer'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minen manifests five tones, three level and two contour. The level tones are high \( \uparrow \), mid \( \mid \), and low \( \downarrow \) while the contour tones comprise rising \( \uparrow \) and falling \( \downarrow \). The five tones are exemplified below:
Ex. 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Mmen Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High (H)</td>
<td>'du'</td>
<td>'dog'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mid (M)</td>
<td>ʰdɛ</td>
<td>'house'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low (L)</td>
<td>ʰɡɛm</td>
<td>'week'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rising (R)</td>
<td>ʰdɡɑ̆</td>
<td>'intestine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Falling (F)</td>
<td>ʰɡɛkɑ̆</td>
<td>'tree'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to analysis drawn from data used for this work, high and low tones have a very high frequency of occurrence as opposed to mid, falling and rising tones which have a relatively low frequency of occurrence.

2.1.5. SYLLABLE STRUCTURE.

An examination of the syllable structure of words in Mmen is essential as it will facilitate the breaking up of words into affixes and roots. This is particularly important in the study of the noun morphology. According to Wiesemann, Ursula et al (1983 p.64), the following criteria can be used in defining a syllable:

"On peut définir la syllabe dans une langue par le noyau (qui peut être une voyelle ou une consonne syllabique);
- On peut la définir par le ton qu'elle porte;
- On peut la définir par la durée d'émission de la sequance de son."

From the above it follows that the nucleus of a syllable is not only restricted to a vowel but also to syllabic nasals as well. In Mmen, syllabic nasals are attested in classes 6, 6a and 9. In these classes, the syllabic nasals function as nominal prefixes. Syllables are not only contained in the roots of words
but also affixes.

The commonest structure of a syllable consists of a consonant and a vowel (CV). This view is shared by Malberg (1963 p. 129) in the following quotation:

"A syllable consisting of a consonant plus a vowel represents the most primitive, and without doubt historically the oldest, of all syllable types, the only one which is general in all languages."

Because the CV syllable type is general in all languages, whenever the syllable takes a structure other than this, problems arise in the exact determination of syllable boundaries. Speaking on this issue, Hyman (1975 p.188) says:

"Whenever languages have syllable types other than CV, complications arise in the exact determination of syllable boundaries."

In Mmen, roots are usually of CV or CVC structure while affixes are V, C, VCV as illustrated below.

Ex. 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Affix</th>
<th>Root Structure</th>
<th>Affix Structure</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>mfú</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>cv</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>'medecines'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ṣpū</td>
<td>ṣ-</td>
<td>cv</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>'clog'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ỉfú</td>
<td>ỉ-</td>
<td>cv</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>'medecine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ɔ̀ɛ̀nɛ̀</td>
<td>ɔ́ɛ́ -</td>
<td>cv</td>
<td>vcv</td>
<td>'houses'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ɔ̀tám tám</td>
<td>ɔ́ɔ́ -</td>
<td>cv</td>
<td>vcv</td>
<td>'fruit'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ǹdɔŋ</td>
<td>ǹ-</td>
<td>cvc</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>'horn'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>уникальн</td>
<td>ɲ-</td>
<td>cvc</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>'week'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ʚkùm</td>
<td>ʚ-</td>
<td>cvc</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>'juju'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ɔ̀ɛ̀ndʒ</td>
<td>ɔ́ɛ́ -</td>
<td>cvc</td>
<td>vcv</td>
<td>'horns'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen from the above data, some plurals are formed by a pre-prefix type of affixation. This means that the plural affix of some nouns (e.g., numbers 4 and 9) is attached to the singular morpheme marker which is a syllabic nasal. Pluralization by this type of affixation is found with class 10 nouns (see chapter 3, section 3.2.11).

The above data reveals that a syllable in Mmen can either be open or closed. Open syllables end in a vowel while closed ones end in a consonant. This position is affirmed by Hyman (1975 p.188) when he notes:

"An open syllable ends in a vowel, while a closed syllable is "checked" or "arrested" by a consonant."

Presented below is an illustration of open and closed syllables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  mfu</td>
<td>'medicines'</td>
<td>q ndʒŋ</td>
<td>'horn'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  dpu</td>
<td>'dog'</td>
<td>10 ndʒŋ</td>
<td>'potatoe'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  ifu</td>
<td>'medicine'</td>
<td>11 jegm</td>
<td>'week'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  dphə</td>
<td>'father'</td>
<td>12 akum</td>
<td>'juju'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  ndʒũ</td>
<td>'intestine'</td>
<td>13 akʰĩ</td>
<td>'boundary stem'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  ụtu</td>
<td>'head'</td>
<td>14 akũm</td>
<td>'thousand'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  akwila</td>
<td>'prostitute'</td>
<td>15 ᵐf'm</td>
<td>'brain'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  ọwu</td>
<td>'person'</td>
<td>16 ilĩŋ</td>
<td>bamboo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. GENERAL REMARKS.

In this chapter, the sound system of Mmen has been reviewed. Special attention was paid to the identification of consonants, vowels, tones and syllable structure.

Attempts were made to distinguish between the voiceless velar fricative \( /\text{-X} \) and its voiced counterpart \( /\text{Y} \). It was concluded that \( /\text{-X} \) is not attested in Mmen, that it is instead \( /\text{Y} \) that is attested. The researcher was pushed on to draw this conclusion by the realisation that \( /\text{Y} \) is widely attested in Mmen, while \( /\text{-X} \) found by Agha, (1987 p. 38, 58), is attested in one word only. Furthermore, even in this lone word \( /\text{y} \), it is seen that \( /\text{-X} \) to be voiced since it is a common phenomenon for sounds to be strengthened intervocally. The failure of \( /\text{-X} \) to be strengthened makes the existence of \( /\text{-X} \) in this position highly questionable. However, this researcher concluded that \( /\text{-X} \) does not exist in Mmen.

Discussions in this chapter also centered on consonant modification and four outstanding modifications, palatalization, labialization, aspiration and homorganic nasal assimilation were identified. Homorganic nasal assimilation was discovered to be attested only with nouns of class 9.

As regards vowels, the central high vowel \( /\text{+?} \) absent in Agha's (1987) list of vowels was found to be attested in the data used for this work. Discussions here focused on the fact that Agha might have mistaken \( /\text{+?} \) for the central mid-high vowels \( /\text{a} \) because in words in which \( /\text{a} \) is attested Agha used but \( /\text{+?} \). However, a tentative conclusion was arrived at; that \( /\text{+?} \) and \( /\text{a} \) are contrastive and are thus two separate phonemes. This conclusion was drawn after an examination of the occurrences of \( /\text{+?} \) and \( /\text{a} \) as illustrated in section 2.1.3. (Ex.7) of this chapter.
The syllable structure of Mmen words was also discussed. The discussions here centered on the syllable structure of affixes and roots. The structure of roots was seen to be either CV or CVC which makes it quite simple as opposed to that of the affix which is C; V; and VCV. The syllable was seen to be attested not only in vowels but also in syllabic nasals. Lastly mention was made of open and closed syllabic types.
CHAPTER THREE: NOUN CLASS PREFIXES OF MMEN.

3.0. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter treats the noun class prefixes of Mmen. However, before proceeding to this, it is important to indicate what is meant by a Bantu language as this will certainly throw light on the discussions that follow. Guthrie (1948 p. 11) postulates the following criteria to be used in identifying languages as Bantu.

" A. Principal Criteria.

1) A system of grammatical genders, usually at least five, with these features:
   a) The sign of gender is a prefix, by means of which words may be assorted into a number of classes varying roughly from ten to twenty.
   b) There is a regular association of pairs of classes to indicate the singular and plural of the genders. In addition to these two-class genders, there are also one-class genders where the prefix is sometimes similar to one of the plural prefixes.
   c) When a word has an independent prefix as the sign of its class any other word which is subordinate to it has to agree with it as to class by means of a dependent prefix.
   d) There is no correlation of the gender with sex reference or with any other clearly defined idea.

2) A vocabulary, part of which can be related by fixed rules to a set of hypothetical common roots.

B. Subsidiary Criteria.

3) A set of invariable cores, or radicals, from which almost all words are formed by an agglutinative process, these radicals
having the following features:

a) They are composed of consonant-vowel-consonant.
b) When a grammatical suffix is attached to the radical there is formed a 'base' on which words identifiable as 'verbals' are built.
c) When a non-grammatical, or lexical suffix is attached to the radical there is formed a 'stem' on which words identifiable as nominals are built. When a nominal belongs to a two-class gender the sounds and tones of the stem are the same in both classes.
d) A radical may be extended by an element found between it and the suffix. Such elements, termed 'extentions' are composed either of vowel-consonant or of a single vowel.
e) The only case of a radical occurring without a prefix of any kind occurs in verbals used as interjections.

4) A balanced vowel system in the radicals, consisting of one open vowel 'a' with an equal number of back and front vowels.

It is noteworthy to say here that the term subsidiary as used above does not imply that the criteria are less important than others but rather that the criteria are less easy to apply.

Like in all Bantu languages, Mmen nouns can be grouped into various classes established on the basis of set criteria. Noun prefixes constitute one of these criteria for grouping nouns into classes as suggested by Welmers (1973:p.159):

"...there are many languages and groups of languages in which affixes with noun stems constitute a major criterion for dividing nouns into a number of noun classes which differ from each other in a variety of grammatical constructions."
The number of noun classes vary from language to language. This is the position held by Wiesemann et al (1984 p.57) when they say:

"Des nombreuses langues et plus particulièrement les langues africaines de la famille Niger-Congo repèrent leurs noms en classes dont le nombre varie selon la langue."

Commenting on noun classes, Alexandre.P. (1967 p.52) says:

"Les classes sont... les catégories grammaticales, des schèmes d'accord marqués en bantou au moyen de préfixes caractéristiques. Le choix des schèmes d'accord c'est-à-dire celui des préfixes caractéristiques des mots accordés, est commandé par le nom de classes nominales."

What stands out clear from this definition is that a class has as characteristics noun prefixes and concord. However, in this work, the treatment of noun class will also take gender into consideration. Another trait of noun classes is semantic content. The nouns of a given class (or gender) at times show semantic correlation although it is common to find nouns of all kinds of semantic origin in the same class. As concerns Bantu languages, only classes one and two have been known to maintain considerable consistency in terms of semantic content (they are mostly kinship nouns). Generally in African languages, nouns with the following semantic content tend to belong to the same class.

i abstract
ii diminutive
iii derived forms
iv augmentative
v infinite location in Bantu languages
vi liquids
3.1. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING NOUN CLASSES.

Nouns in Mmen have been identified to belong to 13 different classes with seven gender distinctions. Distinctions in noun classes are made on the following bases:

1. The form of the prefix
2. Gender
3. Nouns and their concordial elements
4. Semantic content (to a lesser extent).

Using these criteria and with reference to Proto-ring prefixes, the following classes have been established: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 19.

3.2. NOUN PREFIXES.

In this section, the noun prefixes of Mmen will be discussed. This discussion will include identifying various noun prefixes and relating them to those of proto-ring as reconstructed by Hyman (1980).

The 13 different classes identified are:

3.2.1. Class 1.

The prefix of this class has three alternants /ə-/ /əw-/ and /əv-/ eg.

Ex. 13.
1 ə- pʰa 'father'
2 əw-uḍ 'person'
The basic prefix here seems to be /$s-/ which is realised as /$s-/ before consonants. 
/$sW-/ before rounded vowels and 
/$sV-/ before unrounded vowels.

The postulation of /$s-/ as the basic prefix is motivated by the fact that the class 2 prefix /$sY-/ which is the plural of class 1 maintains this initial /$s-/. Moreover, the context of occurrence of /$sW-/ and /$sV-/, is very predictable, /$sW-/ before /$?- round?/ vowels and /$sV-/ before /$?- round?/ vowels.

This gives the impression that /$s-/ is the basic prefix with /$?- W7/ and /$?- V7 only coming in to separate a cluster of vowels. This consonant insertion process can be explained by the rules:

PR.5.  $0 \rightarrow /$?- W7/- $\rightarrow $ + syll $\rightarrow /$ + round $/$

PR.6  $0 \rightarrow /$?- V7/- $\rightarrow $ - syll $\rightarrow /$ - round $/$

The operation of these rules can be illustrated in a sample derivation as this below:

UR # # $+$ pha # # # u # # 2. aku

PR5  |---- $wus$  

PR6  |---- $vaku$

SR  |$\theta$ pha |$\theta$ wus |$\theta$ vaku

The class 1 prefix corresponds to the proto-ring / $U-/.
3.2.2. Class 2.

This class is the plural of class 1 and has as prefix /h3x/ as exemplified below:

Ex. 13.
1. $h3x-pha$ 'fathers'
2. $h3x-at$ 'people'
3. $h3x-pom$ 'builders'
4. $h3x-ain$ 'children'
5. $h3x-aku$ 'orphans'

Looking at the environments of occurrence of /h3x/, one realises that before stems starting with vowels (both rounded and unrounded), the prefix becomes /h3x-. One can then suggest that there is a vowel deletion at morpheme boundary. This process can be captured by the rule:

PR.7. \[ [+\text{syll}] \rightarrow h/ [+] [+] \text{tense} \]

This shwa deletion process is demonstrated in a sample derivation as

\[ UR\#h3x + pha\#h3x + aku \]

\[ PR7 \quad h3x + aku \]

\[ SR \quad h3x + pha_7 \quad h3x + aku_7 \]

It is worth noting here that when the prefix /h3x-\ precedes the diphthong /ai/ of the stem, this diphthong changes to /i/. There is plausible synchronic explanation from /ai/ to /i/
The explanation is that /a/ is a back (/\text{ant}/) and as such /a/ which is front /\text{ant}/, has to change to /i/ to suit the place of articulation of /a/.
The prefix of class 2 corresponds to the proto-ring prefix /bā-/.  

3.2.3. Class 3.

The prefix for class 3 is /a-/ . Example of nouns with this prefix are:

Ex. 14.

1. ʔ-kāf 'armpit'
2. ʔ-kām 'thousand'
3. ʔ-sāh 'bag'
4. ʔ-khiŋ 'boundary stem'
5. ʔ-tum 'message'
6. ʔ-sāʔ 'case'
7. ʔ-tō 'palace'
8. ʔ-tsínə 'behaviour'

The corresponding proto-ring prefix for class 3 is /U-/.  

3.2.4. Class 4.

Class 4 is the plural of class 3. Its prefix is /aša-. Examples of nouns with this prefix are:

Ex. 15.

1. aša-kāf 'armpits'
2. aša-kām 'thousands'
3. aša-sāh 'bags'
4. aša-khiŋ 'boundary stems'
5. aša-tum 'messages'
6. aša-sāʔ 'cases'
7. aša-tō 'palaces'
8. aša-tsínə 'behaviours'

The prefix /aša-/ corresponds to the proto-ring /i-/.
3.2.5. Class 5.

The prefix for this class has two alternants /ä-/ and /i-/. When one looks at the environments of /ä-/ and /i-/, one realises that /ä-/ appears before stems starting with /F/, and /K/ while /i-/ appears in stems starting with /f/, /N/, /K/, /P/, /Z/, /T/ and /f/ which are /-back/, from this analysis, it can be postulated that /ä-/ is the basic prefix for class 5.

Nouns of this class can be distributed into three groups as follows:

Group 5a. Nouns with plurals in class 6 eg.

Ex. 16.
1. á - fő 'farm'
2. á - kú 'forest'
3. á - küm 'juju'
4. í - fú 'medecine'
5. í - wús 'gun'
6. í - kYú 'bed'

Group 5b. Nouns with plurals in class 13 eg.

Ex. 17.
1. í - ps̆ 'jaw'
2. í - zaf 'illness'
3. í - pÍ 'dance'
4. í - tsf 'intelligence'
5. í - fú 'leaf'
6. í - wás 'waterfall'
7. í - sí 'grave'
8. í - ká 'wheel'
Group 5c  Nouns without plurals eg.

Ex.18.
1  i-şájñé    'happiness'
2  i-tṣ3f        'beauty'
3  i-ʒá        'madness'
4  i-ʒʒʊną    'theft'
5  i-wul         'rain'
6  i-wéñ        'grass'

No convincing evidence has been found to explain why the
prefix of this class in some cases is /á-/ and in others /i-/.
However, looking through the data collected for this work, low
vowels have a high frequency of occurrence than high vowels at
word initial position. From this observation, one can suggest
that there is a general vowel lowering process at word initial
position captured by the rule:

PR 8. /aising/ —> /aising/ ΔΔ ΔΔ

If this view holds, then it can be said that the prefix
/á-/ for group 5a (numbers 1 to 3) has already undergone the
vowel lowering process and that the prefix /i-/ for the rest of
the nouns is still to undergo this process. The corresponding
proto-ring prefix for class 5 is /i-/.

3.2.6. Class 6.

The prefix for this class is /M-. Nouns in this class
can be considered under two groups.

Group 1. Nouns with plurals in class 5 eg.

Ex. 19.
1  m- fa?      'farms'
Group 2. Nouns with singulars in class 13 eg Ex. 20.

1  ṁ - lám  'nets'
2  ṁ - ᵇᵃᵖ  'trees'
3  ṁ - támūʔ  'cats'
4  ṁ - tám  'fruits'
5  ṁ - tuʔ  'days'
6  ṁ - lillé  'stars'
7  ṁ - nēʧ  'birds'
8  ṁ - ᵇ altrems  'mats'

When one looks at the environment of /ṁ-/ , it will be realised that it appears before consonants that share the same articulatory features with /k-/ as well as those that do not share articulatory features with /ṁ-/ . This leads to the suggestion that the original prefix might have been /mə-/ which later lost the shwa to become /ṁ-/ . This view is motivated by the fact that the shwa is a weak vowel and can easily be deleted. Secondly the proto-ring prefix for 6a is /Mə-/ and class 6 and 6a share the same nominal features and concord elements. The proto-ring equivalent for class 6 is /ɲ-/ .

3.2.7. Class 6a.

This class differs from class 6 in that it is one of mass nouns. Its prefix is /M-/ . Nouns in this class include:
Ex. 21.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>m-mó</td>
<td>'water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m-dám</td>
<td>'blood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>m-tʃí</td>
<td>'soil'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>m-kàŋ</td>
<td>'gravel'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>m-tsól</td>
<td>'pus'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>m-yiŋ</td>
<td>'breast-milk'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>m-kaín</td>
<td>'gun-powder'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is the case with the class 6 prefix, it can be said that the prefix of 6a might have been /Mə-/ which later lost the following shwa. The proto-ring prefix for class 6a is /Mə-/.

The only difference between M'mn class 6a and Proto-ring class 6a is that the proto-ring prefix has a following shwa which the M'mn prefix lacks.

3.2.8. **Class 7.**

The class 7 prefix is /Á-/.

Ex. 22.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>á-kwála</td>
<td>'prostitute'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>á-kás</td>
<td>'zinc' (sing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>á-yà</td>
<td>'faeces' (sing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>á-k.rpm</td>
<td>'winding sheet'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>á-wamne</td>
<td>'cross'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>á-fúl</td>
<td>'mouse'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>á-típaŋ</td>
<td>'tobacco'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>á-fâte</td>
<td>'a pair of scissors'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>á-3ŋ</td>
<td>'mushroom'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>á-wú</td>
<td>'hand'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the prefix of this class is identical with that of class 5, the collocation of nouns in these two classes with grammatical categories like adjectives, numerals, possessives etc reveal that the prefixes have different concord elements. Again the prefix for class 8 (plural of class 7) has nothing in common with the prefix of class 6 (plural of class 5). On the strength of this it is concluded that they are two separate classes. The proto-ring prefix for class 7 is /kí-/.

3.2.9.1 Class 8.

The prefix for this class has two alternants /í/- and /ə/-.

Examples of class 8 nouns are

Ex. 23.
1 í-kwá là 'prostitutes'
2 í-kwáṣ 'zinc' (pl)
3 í-yá 'faeces' (pl)
4 í-kêm 'winding-sheets'
5 í-wámnè 'crosses'
6 í-fúl 'mice'
7 í-típàj 'tobacco' (pl)
8 í-fàtè 'pairs of scissors'
9 ə-ʒó? 'mushrooms'
10 ə-wú 'hands'

There is difficulty here in stating the basic form of the prefix for this class as there is nothing particularly characteristic of any of the alternants that can differentiate their environments of occurrence. As is the case with class 5, one can suggest a general vowel lowering process captured by PR8 (see section 3.2.5.). Accordingly numbers 9 and 10 have already undergone the process of lowering while the rest are yet to do so.
The proto-ring prefix for class 8 is /bi-/

3.2.10. Class 9.

The prefix for this class is /N-/.

Examples of nouns with this prefix include:

Ex. 24.
1. m-mul 'swelling'
2. m-bélé 'caterpillar'
3. n-dʒ ‘horn'
4. n-dʒ ‘potatoe'
5. n-dʒ ‘song'
6. ñ-g’in ‘girl'
7. ñ-g’am ‘week'
8. ñ-gwà ‘seed'

This homorganic nasal assimilation process observed in the examples above can be captured by the rule:

PR9 \( \text{nas} \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{ant} \\ \text{cor} \end{array} \right] \) - \( \left[ \begin{array}{c} \text{ant} \\ \text{cor} \end{array} \right] \)

Another striking feature with this class is the tone of the prefix. The tone becomes high when it precedes a high tone. This tonal process can be captured by the rule:

PR.10 \( \text{L} \rightarrow \text{H/H-} \)

The above two phonological process can be presented in a sample derivation as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{UR} & \# N + \text{bélé} \#\# N + \text{dʒ} \#\# N + \text{gam} \#\#
\end{align*}
\]

PR.9 mbélé ndʒ ñgam
PR.10 mbélé ndʒ ñgam
SR [mbélé] [ndʒ] [ñgam]
The prefix /N-/ corresponds to proto-ring /N-/.  

3.2.11. Class 10.

The prefix for this class is /s-s-s/. In the formation of plurals of class 9 nouns this prefix is attached to that of class 9 (which is singular). The examples that follow will illustrate this.

Ex. 25.

1. ṭs-s-m-mul 'swellings'
2. ṭs-s-m-béle 'caterpillar'
3. ṭs-s-n-dor 'horns'
4. ṭs-s-n-dor 'potatoes'
5. ṭs-s-n-dor 'songs'
6. ṭs-s-d-gin 'girls'
7. ṭs-s-d-gam 'weeks'
8. ṭs-s-d-gwa 'seed'

The prefix of this class is identical with that of class 4.

Nevertheless, classes 4 and 10 have been treated as two separate classes after considering the following facts:

i) The prefix of class 10 (plural of class 9) is attached to the singular prefix (that of class 9) which is a homorganic nasal. On the other hand, the class 4 prefix is not attached to any singular prefix.

ii) Whereas class 3 prefix has no similarity with the prefix of class 9. That of class 3 is /s/-/ and that of 9 is /N-//. Since class 10 is plural of class 9, the merging of this class with class 4 seems less plausible.

iii) In terms of concord elements, classes 3 and 9 show diffe-
rences thus making it less plausible for their plural classes to be merged. These differences below will help throw more light on this issue:

a) Classes 3 (singular of 4) and 9 (singular of 10) show difference in concord when collocated with the demonstrative pronoun 'that'.

b) When tested with numerals, classes 3 (singular of 4) and 9 (singular of 10) differ with the number 'one'.

c) In terms of the possessives, classes 4 and 10 differ at the level of the third person possessive 'their'. While class 4 has a suffix /-sɑ/ as its concord marker, class 10 has both a prefix /sɑ-/ and a suffix /-sɑ/.

d) With regard to attributes, the concord morpheme for class 3 is /ɑ/- and that of 9 is /i/- . At the level of the attribute 'white', classes 4 and 10 differ in that while the concord element for the former is a prefix /sɑ/-, that for the latter is both a prefix /sɑ-/ and a suffix /-sɑ/.

Elucidations for these differences are found in chapter 4 (section 4.1.1; 4.1.2.; 4.1.3.; 4.1.4.). The proto-ring prefix for class 10 is /-Sɪ/.


Class 13 has as its prefix /sɪρ-/ . Examples of nouns in this class include:

Ex. 26.
1 sɪρ-ϕ ḩj 'jaw'
2 sɪρ-ｚ�퉁 'illnesses'
3 sɪρ-τϣf 'intelligence' (pl)
4 sɪρ-ϣj 'dances'
5 sɪρ-ｆु 'leaves'
The proto-ring prefix for class 13 is /tə-. When nouns of this class are tested with satellites of the head noun (e.g., adjectives, numerals, etc.) the concord element is /tə-. Given this, the feeling is that with time the initial shwa of the prefix /tə- will be lost.

3.2.13. Class 19.

The prefix of class 19 is /sə-/. Nouns with this prefix include:

Ex. 27.
1  sə-∅ ∅-tam 'net'
2  sə-∅ ∅-kə 'tree'
3  sə-∅ ∅-təmu 'cat'
4  sə-∅ ∅-təm 'fruit'
5  sə-∅ ∅-nə 'bird'
6  sə-∅ ∅-m 'mat'
7  sə-∅ ∅-l 'star'

As is the case with class 13, it is possible that with time the prefix /sə- will lose its initial shwa because the concord element for this class is /fə- instead of /sə-. The proto-ring prefix for class 19 is /fə-.

The prefixes for the various classes were discussed in relation to the proto-ring prefixes as reconstructed by Hyman (1980). Below is a recapitulative table of these prefixes. The table has been divided into five columns as follows:
Column 1 gives the noun class number.
Column 2 gives the proto-ring prefix as reconstructed by Hyman (1980).
Column 3 provides the corresponding Mmen noun prefixes.
Column 4 provides Mmen examples of nouns in relation to the various classes.
Column 5 is the gloss.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Proto-Ring</th>
<th>Mmen</th>
<th>Mmen Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 U</td>
<td>ง-, ง-, ง-</td>
<td>ง- ปะ</td>
<td>'father'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ง- ใย</td>
<td>'person'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ง- ญ</td>
<td>'child'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>บำ-</td>
<td>บำ-</td>
<td>บำ- ปะ</td>
<td>'fathers'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>บำ- ใย</td>
<td>'people'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>บำ- ญ</td>
<td>'children'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ย- ยำ</td>
<td>'armpit'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ย- ยำ</td>
<td>'armpits'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ย-, ย-</td>
<td>ย- ปะ</td>
<td>'farm'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ย- ใย</td>
<td>'med cine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ย-</td>
<td>ม-</td>
<td>ม- ปะ</td>
<td>'farms'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ม- ใย</td>
<td>'medecines'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>ผ-</td>
<td>ม-</td>
<td>ม- แว</td>
<td>'breast-milk'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>กิ-</td>
<td>กิ-</td>
<td>กิ- ว่า</td>
<td>'prostitute'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ปี-</td>
<td>ปี-</td>
<td>ปี- ว่า</td>
<td>'prostitutes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>แ-, อ-</td>
<td>อ-</td>
<td>อ- แอม</td>
<td>'week'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-สิ</td>
<td>-สิ</td>
<td>-สิ แอม</td>
<td>'weeks'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ติ-</td>
<td>ติ-</td>
<td>ติ- ปท</td>
<td>'dances'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ตา-</td>
<td>ตา-</td>
<td>ตา- แอม</td>
<td>'tree'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 6.
3.3. GENERAL REMARKS

In this chapter, the noun prefixes of Mmen have been discussed. In the course of this discussion, it has been discovered that the prefixes of some of the classes have alternants. Such is the case with class 1 where the basic prefix /ə-/ is realised as either /ə'-/, /əw-/ or /əv-/. The insertion of /ə-/, /əw-/, or /əv-/, has been considered to have the function of breaking up a cluster of vowels. The class 2 prefix was found to undergo an interesting change. With the voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ coming in to replace /ə-/, /əw-/, or /əv-/, any stem with the diphthong /ə-ai-/, has this diphthong immediately changed to /əi-/. Another striking issue in this chapter is the semantic content of nouns of the various classes. It has been discovered that nouns with different semantic contents can be found in the same class. However, nouns of classes 1, 2, 6a, 13 and 19 are exceptions as they manifest some degree of consistency in terms of semantic content.

The distinctions between classes 4 and 10 posed the greatest problems. However, to arrive at an adhoc solution to this problem, noun prefixes, and their concordial elements were considered. Gender too was also taken into consideration. The similarity between Mmen class 9 and proto-ring class 9 also provided further evidence.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCORD SYSTEM IN MMEN.

4.0. INTRODUCTION.

The previous chapter dealt with Mmen noun prefixes. Prefixes were seen to constitute one of the criteria for distinguishing and defining noun classes. One other very significant criterion for identifying and classifying nouns is concord. Concord will be used here to refer to the agreement of the headnoun and its satellites such as adjectives, pronouns, numerals etc. The significance of this agreement between the headnoun and its satellites is highlighted by Ngueffo N. et al (1987 p.25) in the following statement:

"L'accord dans le nom se signale lorsque le nom se combine avec les déterminants (adjectif qualificatif, possessif, démonstratif, numeral etc). D'une langue à l'autre la façon de marquer l'accord dans le syntagme change."

The importance of concord in noun identification and classification is also emphasised by Welmers (1968, p.162) when he says:

"Bantu noun classes must be distinguished and defined, therefore, not simply by noun prefixes but in addition by morphemes such as the subject pronoun prefixes which stand in agreement or "concord" with noun prefixes. It is this combination of noun prefixes and concordial morphemes that is important."

In Mmen, however, it will be seen that some nouns maintain their prefixes when collocated with their satellites. Welmers (1968 p.171) refers to this repetition as alliterative when he says:

The Bantu languages have often been described as having alliterative concord.
Some nouns will be seen to have concord morphemes that are quite different from their nominal affixes. In addition to this, other nouns with different nominal affixes will be discovered to share the same concord elements. This situation provokes the question as to whether such nouns do not form a single class. However, such nouns with different prefixes but similar concord elements will be considered to belong to the same class of concord as suggested by Leroy (1977 p. 76) when she says:

"Si les noms donnés commandent une même série d'accords, ils appartiennent à la même classe d'accord."

4.1. CONCORD SYSTEM.

The treatment of concord system in Mmen will require the collocation of the nouns of various classes with possessive pronouns (Poss), adjectives (A), demonstratives (Dem), associative markers (ASS.M.), and numerals as seen below:

4.1.1. POSSESSIVE PRONOUN (POSS).

The possessive pronouns taken into consideration here will include: my, your(sing), your (pl), his or her, our and their. The noun phrases below highlight concord between the headnoun and the possessive pronoun.

Ex. 29. Class 1.

\[ /sw-u\# v\#m/ \rightarrow /sw-u\# p-v\#m/ \] (my person)

person my

\[ /sw-u\# v\#/ \rightarrow /sw-u\# p-v\#/ \] (your(sing) person)

person your(sing)
/ꜱw-ʊ/) vaín/ ——> /ꜱw-ʊ/) ʊ-vaín/ 'your(pl) person'

person your(pl)

/ꜱw-ʊ/) və/ ——> /ꜱw-ʊ/) ʊ-v / 'his/her person'

person his/her

/ꜱw-ʊ/) vásē/ ——> /ꜱw-ʊ/) ʊ-vásē/ 'our person'

person our

/ꜱw-ʊ/) ənə/ ——> /ꜱw-ʊ/) ʊ-ənə/ 'their person'

person their

Ex. 30. Class 2

/ʃx-ə/) vəm/ ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-ʊm/ 'my people'

people my

/ʃx-ə/) və/ ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-v / 'your(sing) people'

people your(sing)

/ʃx-ə/) vaín/ ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-vaín/ 'your(pl) people'

people your(pl)

/ʃx-ə/) vəŋ / ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-ʊŋ / 'his/her people'

people his/her

/ʃx-ə/) vásē/ ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-vásē/ 'our people'

people our

/ʃx-ə/) ənə/ ——> /ʃx-ə/) ʊ-ənə/ 'their people'

people their

Ex. 31. Class 3

/ʃ-kāf # zəm/ ——> /ʃ-kāf ʊ-zəm/ 'my armpit'

armpit my

/ʃ-kāf # zə/ ——> /ʃ-kāf ʊ- ə/ 'your(sing) armpit'

armpit your (sing)

/ʃ-kāf # zāin/ ——> /ʃ-kāf ʊ-zāin/ 'your(pl) armpit'

armpit your(pl)
Ex. 32. Class 4.

/ə-kɑf # vəŋ/ —> [ə-kɑf ə-vəŋ] 'his/her armpit'
armpit his/her

/ə-kɑf # ɣûsə/ —> [ə-kɑf ə-ɣûsə] 'our armpit'
armpit our

/ə-kɑf # ɣənə/ —> [ə-kɑf ə-ɣənə] 'their armpit'
armpit their

Ex. 33 Class 5

/ʔ-kʊm # kəmʃ/ —> [ʔ-kʊm ʔ-kəmʃ] 'my juju'
juju my

/ʔ-kʊm # kəyə/ —> [ʔ-kʊm ʔ-kəyə] 'your(sing) juju'
juju your(sing)

/ʔ-kʊm # kənə/ —> [ʔ-kʊm ʔ-kənə] 'your(pl) juju'
juju your(pl)

/ʔ-kʊm # və/ —> [ʔ-kʊm ʔ-və] 'his/her juju'
juju his/her
Ex. 34 Class 6

/á-kum # késá/ ——> /á-kum ø-késá/ 'our juju'
juju our
/á-kum # ýánš/ ——> /á-kum ø-ýánš/ 'their juju'
juju their

Ex. 35. Class 6a.

/á-l+ # m̄ám/ ——> /á-l+ ø-m̄ám/ 'my wine'
wine my
/á-l+ # v̄m/ ——> /á-l+ ø-v̄m/ 'your(sing) wine'
wine your(sing)
/á-l+ # vaín/ ——> /á-l+ ø-vain/ 'your (pl) wine'
wine your(pl)
/á-l+ # v̄ḡ ——> /á-l+ ø-v̄ḡ 'his/her wine'
wine his/her
/á-l+ # m̄as̄m/ ——> /á-l+ ø-m̄as̄m/ 'our wine'
wine our
/á-l+ # ýánš ——> /á-l+ ø-ýánš 'their wine'
wine their
Ex. 36 Class 7

/á-wámnè # kámá7/ —> /á-wámnè ø-kámá7/ 'my cross'
cross my
/á-wámnè # kéyá/ —> /á-wámnè ø-kéyá7/ 'your(sing) cross'
cross your(sing)
/á-wámnè # káná/ —> /á-wámnè ø-káná7/ 'your(pl) cross'
cross your(pl)
/á-wámnè # vé/ —> /á-wámnè ø-vé7/ 'his/her cross'
cross his/her
/á-wámnè # késá/ —> /á-wámnè ø-késá7/ 'our cross'
cross our
/á-wámnè # x̂̄ná7/ —> /á-wámnè ø-x̂̄ná7/ 'their cross'
cross their

Ex. 37. Class 8

/í-wámnè # vám/ —> /í-wámnè ø-vám/ 'my crosses'
crosses my
/í-wámnè # vë/ —> /í-wámnè ø-vë7/ 'your(sing) crosses'
crosses your(sing)
/í-wámnè # váín/ —> /í-wámnè ø-váín/ 'your(pl) crosses'
crosses your(pl)
/í-wámnè # váŋ/ —> /í-wámnè ø-váŋ7/ 'his/her crosses'
crosses his/her
/í-wámnè # vásé/ —> /í-wámnè ø-vásé7/ 'our crosses'
crosses our
/í-wámnè # x̂̄ná7/ —> /í-wámnè ø-x̂̄ná7/ 'their crosses'
crosses their

Ex. 38. Class 9

/í-dʒ̄m# zám/ —> /í-dʒ̄m ø-zám7/ 'my horn'

horn my

/ŋ-dɔŋ# žɛ/-→ L^n-dɔŋ ø-žɛ/? your(sing) horn' horn your(sing)
/ŋ-dɔŋ# zain/-→ L^n-dɔŋ ø-zain/? 'your (pl) horn' horn your(pl)
/ŋ-dɔŋ# vəŋ/-→ L^n-dɔŋ ø-vəŋ/? 'his/her horn' horn his/her
/ŋ-dɔŋ# zasɛ/-→ L^n-dɔŋ ø-zasɛ/? 'our horn' horn our
/ŋ-dɔŋ# yən~/→ L^n-dɔŋ ø-yən~/7 'their horn' horn their

Ex. 40. Class 13.

/ʃə-ľɛŋ# tɛn/-→ Lʃə-ľɛŋ tɛn-tɛn/? 'my jaws' jaws my
/ʃə-ľɛŋ# tɛ/-→ Lʃə-ľɛŋ tɛ-tɛn/? 'your(sing) jaws' jaws your(sing)
Ex. 41. Class 19.

\[
/\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n}/ \rightarrow /\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n} \text{t̥̂}_\text{n}-t̥_\text{a}/ 'your(pl) jaws'
\]
\[
\text{jaws your(pl)}
\]
\[
/\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n}/ \rightarrow /\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n} \text{t̥̂}_\text{n}-t̥_\text{a}/ 'his/her jaws'
\]
\[
\text{jaws his/her}
\]
\[
/\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n}/ \rightarrow /\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n} \text{t̥̂}_\text{n}-t̥_\text{a}/ 'our jaws'
\]
\[
\text{jaws our}
\]
\[
/\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n}/ \rightarrow /\text{t̥ː}' \text{t̥ː} \text{p̥̂}_\text{n} \text{t̥̂}_\text{n}-t̥_\text{a}/ 'their jaws'
\]
\[
\text{jaws their}
\]

From the above collocation of the headnoun with possessives the following remarks can be made:

- Classes 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 share the same concord element /p-\ at all levels.
- Classes 6 and 6a have the same concord element with classes 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 when the noun is collocated with the first person possessive 'my'.
- Classes 6 and 6a have the same concord morpheme at all levels.
Although classes 4 and 10 look very much alike, they differ with respect to the concord marker that marks agreement between the noun and the third person possessive 'their'. While class 4 is marked here by a suffix /-sə/, class 10 has a zero /∅-/ morpheme.

The concord elements of classes 4, 10, 13 and 14 are /sə'/, /sə'/, /tə'/ and /fə'/. The prefixes for these classes are /sə'-, /sə'/, /tə'-/ and /fə'-/ respectively, one can suggest that concord marking, deletes the initial vowel (shwa) of these prefixes.

Below is a recapitulative table of the concord morphemes that mark agreement between the possessives and the nouns.

**Concord Elements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>my</th>
<th>your(sing)</th>
<th>your(pl)</th>
<th>his/her</th>
<th>our</th>
<th>their</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
<td>-sə'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
<td>∅-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2. ADJECTIVE (A).

Here the following adjectives will be used: big, white, bad, and black.

Ex. 42  Class 1.

/\$w-u^3 # $\bar{\gamma}^\gamma?'\bar{\alpha}\bar{\theta}\bar{\delta}/ \rightarrow \_\$w-u^3 \phi-\gamma^\gamma?'\bar{\alpha}\bar{\theta}\bar{\delta} / 'big person'

person big

/\$w-u^3 # $\bar{\pi}_{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\bar{\bar{\gamma}}} / \rightarrow \_\$w-u^3 \phi-\bar{\pi}_{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\bar{\gamma}} / 'white person'

person white

/\$w-u^3 # \bar{\pi}\bar{\bar{\alpha}} / \rightarrow \_\$w-u^3 \phi-\bar{\pi}\bar{\bar{\alpha}} / 'bad person'

person bad

/\$w-u^3 # \bar{\bar{\bar{\gamma}}}_{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\bar{\beta}} / \rightarrow \_\$w-u^3 \phi-\bar{\bar{\bar{\gamma}}}_{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\bar{\beta}} / 'black person'

person black

Ex. 43  Class 2.

/\$y-\bar{\alpha} # \bar{\gamma}^\gamma?'\bar{\alpha}\bar{\bar{\beta}} / \rightarrow \_\$y-\bar{\alpha} \bar{\beta}\bar{\gamma}^\gamma?'\bar{\alpha}\bar{\bar{\beta}} / 'big people'

people big

/\$y-\bar{\alpha} # $\bar{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\bar{\gamma}} / \rightarrow \_\$y-\bar{\alpha} \bar{\beta}\bar{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\bar{\gamma}} / 'white people'

people white

/\$y-\bar{\alpha} # \bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\alpha} / \rightarrow \_\$y-\bar{\alpha} \bar{\bar{\beta}}\bar{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\beta}} / 'bad people'

people bad

/\$y-\bar{\alpha} # \bar{\alpha}\bar{\bar{\bar{\beta}}} / \rightarrow \_\$y-\bar{\alpha} \bar{\bar{\alpha}}\bar{\bar{\bar{\beta}}} / 'black people'

people black
Ex. 44 Class 3

/š-kāf # ʔaʔa/ —> /šš-kāf ʔ-χάʔa 'big armpit'
armpit big

/š-kāf # fēfē/ —> /šš-kāf ʔ-ʃāfā 'white armpit'
armpit white

/š-kāf # pī/ —> /šš-kāf ʔ-ʃpī 'bad armpit'
armpit bad

/š-kāf # fəmə/ —> /šš-kāf ʔ-ʃəmə 'black armpit'
armpit black

Ex. 45 Class 4.

/šš-kāf # ʔaʔa/ —> /šš-so-kāf sə-χάʔa 'big armpits'
armpits big

/šš-kāf # fēfē/ —> /šš-so-kāf sə-ʃāfā 'white armpits'
armpits white

/šš-kāf # pī/ —> /šš-so-kāf sə-pī 'bad armpits'
armpits bad

/šš-kāf # fəmə/ —> /šš-so-kāf sə-ʃəmə 'black armpit'
armpits black

Ex. 46 Class 5.

/ə-kūm # ʔaʔa/ —> /ə-kūm ə-χάʔa 'big juju'
juju big

/ə-kūm # fēfē/ —> /ə-kūm ə-ʃāfā 'white juju'
juju white

/ə-kūm # pī/ —> /ə-kūm ə-ʃpī 'bad juju'
juju bad

/ə-kūm # fəmə/ —> /ə-kūm ə-ʃəmə 'black juju'
juju black
Ex. 47 Class 6.

\[ /m\text{-}k\text{um} \# \chi\text{a}\text{r} \rightarrow /m\text{-}k\text{um} \ m\text{-}\chi\text{a}\text{r} / \] 'big jujus'

jujus big

\[ /m\text{-}k\text{um} \# f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} \rightarrow /m\text{-}k\text{um} \ m\text{-}f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} / \] 'white jujus'

jujus white

\[ /m\text{-}k\text{um} \# p\text{m} \rightarrow /m\text{-}k\text{um} \ m\text{-}p\text{m} / \] 'bad jujus'

jujus bad

\[ /m\text{-}k\text{um} \# f\text{m}\text{e} \rightarrow /m\text{-}k\text{um} \ m\text{-}f\text{m}\text{e} / \] 'black jujus'

jujus black.

Ex. 48 Class 6a

\[ /m\text{-}l\text{=} \# \chi\text{a}\text{r} \rightarrow /m\text{-}l\text{=} \ m\text{-}\chi\text{a}\text{r} / \] 'big wine'

wine big

\[ /m\text{-}l\text{=} \# f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} \rightarrow /m\text{-}l\text{=} \ m\text{-}f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} / \] 'white wine'

wine white

\[ /m\text{-}l\text{=} \# p\text{m} \rightarrow /m\text{-}l\text{=} \ m\text{-}p\text{m} / \] 'bad wine'

wine bad

\[ /m\text{-}l\text{=} \# f\text{m}\text{e} \rightarrow /m\text{-}l\text{=} \ m\text{-}f\text{m}\text{e} / \] 'black wine'

wine black.

Ex. 49 Class 7

\[ /\text{wamn}\text{e} \# \chi\text{a}\text{r} \rightarrow /\text{wamn}\text{e} \ a\text{-}\chi\text{a}\text{r} / \] 'big cross'

cross big

\[ /\text{wamn}\text{e} \# f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} \rightarrow /\text{wamn}\text{e} \ a\text{-}f\text{f}\text{e}\text{a} / \] 'white cross'

cross white

\[ /\text{wamn}\text{e} \# p\text{m} \rightarrow /\text{wamn}\text{e} \ a\text{-}p\text{m} / \] 'bad cross'

cross bad

\[ /\text{wamn}\text{e} \# f\text{m}\text{e} \rightarrow /\text{wamn}\text{e} \ a\text{-}f\text{m}\text{e} / \] 'black cross'

cross black
Ex. 50. Class 8

/í-wámné # jà?à/ —> /í-wámné 1-χà?à/ 'big crosses'
crosses big
/í-wámné # fà?à/ —> /í-wámné 1-fà?à/ 'white crosses'
crosses white
/í-wámné # pì/ —> /í-wámné 1-pì/ 'bad crosses'
crosses bad
/í-wámné # fàme/ —> /í-wámné 1-fàme/ 'black crosses'
crosses black

Ex. 51. Class 9

/í-ndày # jà?à/ —> /í-ndày 1-χà?à/ 'big horn'
horn big
/í-ndày # fà?à/ —> /í-ndày 1-fà?à/ 'white horn'
horn white
/í-ndày # pì/ —> /í-ndày 1-pì/ 'bad horn'
horn bad
/í-ndày # fàme/ —> /í-ndày 1-fàme/ 'black horn'
horn black

Ex. 52 Class 10.

horns big
horns white
/í-sà-í-ndày # pì/ —> /í-sà-í-ndày sà-pì-sà/ 'bad horns'
horns bad
/í-sà-í-ndày # fàme/ —> /í-sà-í-ndày sà-fàme-sà/ 'black horns'
horns black
Ex. 53. Class 14.

\[ /\text{fə}\text{-tam} # /\overline{\text{fə}^\prime} / \rightarrow /\text{fə}\text{-tam} \, \text{fə}-\text{a^\prime}-\text{fə} \] 'big fruit'

fruit big

\[ /\text{fə}\text{-tam} # /\overline{\text{fə}^\prime} / \rightarrow /\text{fə}\text{-tam} \, \text{fə}-\text{fə}^\prime-\text{fə} \] 'white fruit'

fruit white

\[ /\text{fə}\text{-tam} # /\overline{\text{p}^\prime} / \rightarrow /\text{fə}\text{-tam} \, \text{p}^\prime-\text{fə} \] 'bad fruit'

fruit bad

\[ /\text{fə}\text{-tam} # /\overline{\text{fə}^\prime} / \rightarrow /\text{fə}\text{-tam} \, \text{fə}-\text{fə}^\prime-\text{fə} \] 'black fruit'

fruit black

The juxtaposition of the headnoun with the adjective (qualifying) reveals the following:

- That classes 4 and 10 differ at the level of the adjective 'black'. While class 4 is marked by the concord element /sə^-/, a prefix, class 10 is marked both by prefix /sə^-/ and suffix /-sə/.
- Classes 8 and 9 share the same concord morpheme /í^-/
- Class 5 has /á^-/ as its concord marker which is different from its nominal prefix /á^-/.
- Classes 3 and 5 share the same concord element /á^-/.

A recapitulative table of the A concord elements is presented below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Concord Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ϕ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>θ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ζ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>σ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>η-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ο-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6α</td>
<td>ο-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ς-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ι-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ι-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>κ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>τ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>θ'-, -θ-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 7.

4.1.3. **NUMERAL (NUM).**

Discussions on numerals will take into consideration four numbers: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Class 1.

Ex. 55. \[\text{\textbackslash{}eqnarray} /\theta w-u\theta \neq m\bar{\eta} / \rightarrow /\bar{\eta} w-u\eta \bar{\gamma} \eta-m \bar{\gamma}\bar{\eta}\] 'one person'  

person one

Ex. 56. Class 2

\[\text{\textbackslash{}eqnarray} /\sigma y-\sigma \neq p\tilde{e} / \rightarrow /\sigma y-\sigma \phi-p\tilde{e}\] 'two people'

people two
Ex. 58. Class 4

/šš'kūf # pē/ ——>/šš'kūf š'pē/ 'two armpits'
armpits two

/šš'kūf # tā/ ——>/šš'kūf š'tā/ 'three armpits'
armpit three

/šš'kūf # kye / ——>/šš'kūf š'kyē / 'four armpits'
armpits four

Ex. 59 Class 5

/á-kūm # mō / ——>/á-kūm ō-mō / 'one juju'
juju one

Ex. 60. Class 6

/m-kūm # pē/ ——>/m-kūm m-pē / 'two jujus'
jujus two

/m-kūm # tā/ ——>/m-kūm m-tā / 'three jujus'
jujus three

/m-kūm # kye / ——>/m-kūm m-kyē / 'four jujus'
jujus four

Ex. 61. Class 7

/á-wāmnē # mō / ——>/á-wāmnē ō-mō / 'one cross'
cross one
Ex. 62  Class 8

/ɪ-wāmne # p̣e/ → /ɪ-wāmne ɪ-p̣e/ 'two crosses'  
crosses two
/ɪ-wāmne # ṭa/ → /ɪ-wāmne ɪ-ṭa/ 'three crosses'  
crosses three
/ɪ-wāmne # kYē / → /ɪ-wāmne ɪ-kYē/ 'four crosses'  
crosses four

Ex. 63  Class 9

/ń-dg̣ # ṃḍ/ → /ń-dg̣ ɪ-ṃḍ/ 'one horn'  
horn one

Ex. 64. Class 10.

/ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ # p̣e/ → /ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ sɔ-p̣e/ 'two horns'  
horns two
/ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ # ṭa/ → /ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ sɔ-ṭa/ 'three horns'  
horns three
/ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ # kYē / → /ɔsɔ-n-dg̣ sɔ-kYē/ 'four horns'  
horns four

Ex.65 Class 13.

/ɔtɔ-pən # p̣e/ → /ɔtɔ-pən tɔ-p̣e/ 'two jaws'  
jaws two
/ɔtɔ-pən # ṭa/ → /ɔtɔ-pən tɔ-ṭa/ 'three jaws'  
jaws three
/ɔtɔ-pən # kYē / → /ɔtɔ-pən tɔ-kYē/ 'four jaws'  
jaws four

With respect to the collocation of the head noun with numerals, 
the following observations can be made:

- Classes 1, 3 and 5 have the same concord morpheme /ɔ-/ when
collocated with the number 'one'.

Classes 4 and 10 have the same concord morpheme with respect to the numbers, 'two', 'three' and 'four'. Below is a chart that summarises the concord elements of nouns when collocated with numerals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>my one</th>
<th>p two</th>
<th>ta three</th>
<th>k'ê four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>m-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
<td>sã-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>tã-</td>
<td>tã-</td>
<td>tã-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fã-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 8.

The strokes (-), mark instances where collocation of the noun with numerals is impossible.
4.1.4. **DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN. (DEM).**

The near speaker (NS) demonstratives 'this' and 'thèse' and the near listener (NL) demonstratives 'that' and 'those' will be used to illustrate concord between head nouns and the demonstrative determiner.

Ex. 66 Class 1

Iσw-u 3  # vēγ/ → Iσw-u 3  φ-vēγ? 'this person'

Iσw-u 3  # vi/ → Iσw-u 3  φ-vi? 'that person'

Ex. 67 Class 2.

Iσ-x-y # xēγ/ → Iσ-x-y φ-xēγ/ 'these people'

Iσ-x-y # xēγ/ → Iσ-x-y φ-xēγ? 'those people'

Ex. 68. Class 3

Iσ-käf # zēγ/ → Iσ-käf φ-zēγ? 'this armpit'

Iσ-käf # ē/ → Iσ-käf φ-ē? 'that armpit'

Ex. 69. Class 4

Iσsē-käf # sēγ/ → Iσsē-käf φ-sēγ? 'these armpits'

Iσsē-käf # sē/ → Iσsē-käf φ-sē? 'those armpits'
Ex. 70 Class 5

/á'-kúm # kíŋ/ —> /á'-kúm š-kíŋ/ 'this juju'
juju this

/á'-kúm # kYe/ —> /á'-kúm š-kYe/ 'that juju'
juju that

Ex. 71 Class 6

/m'-kúm # māŋ/ —> /m'-kúm š-māŋ/ 'these jujus'
jujus these

/m'-kúm # mē/ —> /m'-kúm š-mē/ 'those jujus'
jujus those

Ex. 72 Class 6a

/m'-l+ # māŋ/ —> /m'-L+ š-māŋ/ 'this wine'
wine this

/m'-L+ # mē/ —> /m'-L+ š-mē/ 'that wine'
wine that

Ex. 73 Class 7

/á'-wāmnē # ǩāŋ/ —> /á'-wāmnē š-ǩāŋ/ 'this cross'
cross this

/á'-wāmnē # kYe/ —> /á'-wāmnē š-kYe/ 'that cross'
cross that

Ex. 74 Class 8

/í'-wāmnē # v̌ēŋ/ —> /í'-wāmnē š-v̌ēŋ/ 'these crosses'
cross these

/í'-wāmnē # vē/ —> /í'-wāmnē š-vē/ 'those crosses'
crosses those

Ex. 75 Class 9

/š-džŋ # zāŋ/ —> /š-džŋ š-zāŋ/ 'this horn'
horn this
Looking at the above analysis, one remarks that:

- the demonstrative pronoun in Mmen cannot pour light on the concord system of Mmen. This is because, all the classes share the same concord element, */b/- when their nouns are collocated with the demonstrative.

- Classes 3 and 9 show difference not in concord but with respect to the demonstrative pronoun. While that for class 3 is */b3^2/, that for 9 is */3^2^2/. At one point in the analysis of the noun classes of Mmen, the difference between these demonstratives was taken as one of the aspects that distinguish class 3 from class 9.
Presented here below is a table of the demonstrative concord elements for the various classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>this</th>
<th>that</th>
<th>these</th>
<th>those</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>φ-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig.9.

The strokes (—) mark instances where the head noun cannot be collocated with the demonstrative pronoun.

4.1.5. **ASSOCIATIVE MARKER (ASS.M)**.

When the associative marker is tested with the head noun, they are seen to manifest concord. The examples below help to elucidate this:
Ex. 79 Class 1.

/w-u 3 #vain/ —> /w-u 3 9 - vain/ 'the person of the child'
person child

Ex. 80. Class 2

/g-3 #vain/ —> /g-3 9 - vain/ 'the people of the child'
people child

Ex. 81. Class 3.

/kf #vain/ —> /k'f 9 - vain/ 'the armpit of the child'
armpit child

Ex. 82. Class 4

/s3-kf #vain/ —> /s3-kf s3-vain-s3/ 'the armpits of the child'
armpits child

Ex. 83. Class 5

/l'a-kum #vain/ —> /l'a-kum 9 - vain/ 'the juju of the child'
juju child

Ex. 84 Class 6.

/m-kum #vain/ —> /m-kum m-vain/ 'the jujus of the child'
jujus child

Ex. 85 Class 6a

/m-l* #vain/ —> /m-l* m-vain/ 'the wine of the child'
wine child

Ex. 86 Class 7

/l-a-wamne #vain/ —> /l-a-wamne van-a/ 'the cross of the child'
cross child

Ex. 87. Class 8

/l'i-wamne #vain/ —> /l'i-wamne van-2/ 'the crosses of the child'
crosses child
Ex. 88 Class 9

/ŋ-dŋ#vain/ → /ŋ-dŋ ʊ-vain/ 'the horn of the child'

Ex. 89 Class 10

/sə-n-dŋ#vain/ → /sə-n-dŋs-vain-sə/ 'the horns of the child'

Ex. 90. Class 13.

/sə-tə-pə#vain/ → /sə-tə-pə tə-vain-tə/ 'the jaws of the child'

Ex. 91 Class 19.

/sə-tə-təm # vain/ → /sə-tə-təm ʊ-vain-tə/ 'the fruit of the child'

From the above illustration, one can make the following remarks:

- Classes 1 and 2 have the same concord element /ʊ-/.
- Classes 4 and 10 have the same concord element /sə-/.
- Class 9 has a /ʊ-/ concord element.
- Class 5 has a /sə-/ concord element, which is different from its nominal prefix /sə-/. For purposes of clarity, a summary of the concord elements for the various classes is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Concord Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ʊ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ʊ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>sə-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ʊ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>sə-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>m-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Fig. 10.
ii) Classes 1 and 2 when collocated with possessives, associatives, demonstratives and numerals are seen to have identical concord elements /∅-/. 

iii) When nouns of all the classes are collocated with the demonstratives, they are seen to share the identical concord element /∅-/. 

iv) When nouns of class 3 and 5 are juxtaposed with adjectives, possessives, associatives and numerals, their concord elements are /∅-/ (for possessives and demonstratives) and /∅'-/ (for adjectives, associatives and numerals).

v) Classes 4 and 10 have identical concord elements /s∅'-/ (when collocated with possessives, adjectives, associatives and numerals) and /∅'-/ (when collocated with demonstratives).

vi) Nouns of classes 6 and 6a have identical concord elements /∅'-/ and /m'-/ when they are collocated with possessives, adjectives, associatives and demonstratives.

vii) Classes 8 and 9 nouns have identical concord morphemes /∅'-/ (when tested with possessives and demonstratives) and /∅'-/ (when tested with adjectives and numerals).

viii) Despite the cases of identical concord elements, the rest of the classes i.e 7, 13 and 19 remain clearly distinct in that their concord elements are exclusive properties of these classes.

4.2. GENERAL REMARKS.

In this chapter, the discussion has centered on concord. Among grammatical categories chosen for this discussion, it has been revealed that the demonstrative pronoun manifests a /∅'-/ concord morpheme for all the classes. It has equally been observed that some classes have concord morphemes whose morphological forms are different from those of their nominal prefixes; such is the case with classes 5 and 9. In classes 4,10,13 and 19, the forms of the concord elements /s∅'-/, /s∅'-/, /t∅'-/ and /∅'-/ res-
pectively are similar to those of their nominal prefixes /a’sa-/,
/a’mi-/ and /a’i/ except that, in marking concord, these
elements delete the initial vowel (shwa). This may be an indica-
tion that the initial vowel of the prefix will finally be dele-
ted.

It is also significant to note that with some classes
like 1,3 and 5, although they show disparity in noun prefixes,
they/identical concord elements when tested with possessives, and
demonstratives. The nominal prefixes for classes 1,3 and 5 are
/a/,
/a'/ and /a-/ respectively, they all have /θ-/ as their
concord element when tested with the aforementioned categories.

Also, classes 5 and 9 with nominal prefixes /a-/ and
/N-/ respectively, both have /θ-/ as their concord element when
nouns in these two classes are collocated with possessives and
demonstratives.

Classes 8 and 9 have /ί-/ and /N-/ as their nominal
prefixes respectively. But when nouns of these two classes are
collocated with possessives and demonstratives their concord
element is /θ-. When tested with adjectives and numerals, their
concor element is /ί-.
CHAPTER FIVE. GENDER AND SEMANTIC CONTENT.

5.0. INTRODUCTION.

The previous chapter was devoted to the study of concord system in Mmen. In this chapter, attention will be paid to the gender and semantic content of Mmen nouns. Gender as used here, refers to the relationship between singular nouns and their plural counterparts. For the purpose of this chapter therefore, nouns will be grouped into singular - plural pairs in order to confirm the classes established in chapter 3. The view that nouns be grouped into singular plural pairs is shared by Leroy (1977,p.29) when she says;

"Lorsque les noms d'une langue se répartissent en différentes catégories (classes) et que la catégorisation est flexionnelle, on peut parler de genres. Plus loin nous employons le mot 'genre' pour désigner une classe ou un appariement de deux classes l'une singulière et l'autre plurielle."

Anderson, (1980 p.52) shares the same opinion when he remarks that;

"...most nouns belong to one of the odd-numbered singular classes and one of the even-numbered plural classes. This pairing of a singular with a plural class for a given noun root is called its gender."

However, some nouns in Mmen will be discovered to have no plural forms. This will be discussed in detail under section 5. Gender is a common characteristic of Bantu languages. According to Welmers (1973 p.161):
What is striking about gender in Bantu languages is that it does not pertain to male-female relationship but rather to the relationship between singular and plural nouns. This singular-plural relationship is marked by nominal affixes which group nouns into various classes.

In discussing gender, the semantic content of nouns will also be taken into consideration. Semantic content used to be a major criterion for determining noun classes but now semantic content alone cannot be a good enough criterion. This is because semantic traits have either been disappearing with time or becoming so variable that it is now common to find nouns with various semantic contents in the same class. Talking about semantic content, Hedinger (1980 p.12) says:

"In the past, the Bantu noun classes may have been based on a semantic classification of nouns, but now it appears to be a purely arbitrary system where in no one class can nouns of only one semantic content be found."

That semantic content is no longer a reliable criterion for noun classification is also expressed by Wiesemann (1984 p.46):

"Les critères sémantiques de classification ayant disparus, aujourd'hui c'est souvent selon des critères purement phonétiques que ces classes sont
5.1. GENDER AND SEMANTIC CONTENT.

To establish gender in Mmen, the affixes as well as semantic content of various nouns have been taken into consideration. Some class pairs show considerable consistency in terms of semantic content but others do not. Based on semantic content, one can distinguish the following genders in Mmen.

1/2 made up of exclusively kinship nouns
3/4 made up of mostly mixed nouns
5/6 contains mostly mixed nouns
6a made up of mass nouns
7/8 contains mostly mixed nouns
9/10 made up of mostly mixed nouns
5/13 contains augmentatives
19/6 contains diminitives.

Looking at the above genders one sees that genders 1/2, 6a, 5/13 and 19/6 show some consistency in terms of semantic content. It will however, be discovered in later sections that apart from gender 1/2 which is exclusively one of kinship nouns, the others do not share this exclusive characteristic.

5.2. DOUBLE AND SINGLE CLASS GENDERS.

In Mmen there are 7 double class genders (1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 5/13 and 19/6) and two single class genders (5 and 6a). Speaking about double and single class genders Walters (1980 p.111) has this to say:

"Many nouns are members of two classes, one to mark singular and the other to mark plural. Some nouns,
however, belong to one class. Many of these are mass nouns, collective nouns or abstract nouns. Pairings of two classes are here referred to as "double class genders" while the others are referred to as "single class gender".

Below is a table of double and single class genders in Mmen.

![Diagram showing class pairings]

The classes marked with asterisks are single class genders.

5.2.1 DOUBLE CLASS GENDERS.

5.2.1.1. Gender 1/2.

This gender exclusively designates kinship nouns as exemplified below:
5.2.1.2. **Gender.** 3/4

Nouns of this gender can be grouped into animate, inanimate and parts of the body nouns as seen below:

**- Animate nouns.**

**Ex 44**

1. -notch 'goat'  notch 'goats'
2. -notch 'cricket'  notch 'crickets'
3. -notch 'chief'  notch 'chiefs'
4. -notch 'dog'  notch 'dogs'
5. -notch 'successor'  notch 'successors'

**- Inanimate nouns**

**Ex. 45**

1. -notch 'palace'  notch 'palaces'
2. -notch 'thousand'  notch 'thousands'
3. -notch 'message'  notch 'messages'
4. -notch 'dream'  notch 'dreams'
5. -notch 'case'  notch 'cases'

**- Part of the body nouns**

**Ex. 46**

1. notch 'armpit'  notch 'armpits'
2. notch 'back'  notch 'backs'
5.2.1.3. **Gender 5/6.**

This gender comprises nouns related to plants and miscellaneous eg.

- Plant related nouns.
  
  Ex. 47.
  1 á-fu 'farm' m-fu 'farms'
  2 á-kú 'forest' m-kú 'forests'

- Miscellaneous nouns.
  
  Ex. 48.
  1 á-kúm 'juju' m-kúm 'jujus'
  2 í-fú 'medicines' m-fú 'medecines'
  3 í-wús 'gun' m-wús 'guns'
  4 í-kú 'bed' m-kú 'beds'

5.2.1.4. **Gender 7/8.**

This gender contains animate and inanimate nouns as follows:

- Animate nouns.
  
  Ex. 49.
  1 á-kwálá 'prostitute' 1-kwálá 'prostitutes'
  2 á-fókäm 'cockroach' 1-fókäm 'cockroaches'
  3 á-ful 'mouse' 1-fúl 'mice'
  4 á-tswámákès 'frog' 1-tswámákès 'frogs'
  5 á-zà 'mushroom' 1-zà 'mushrooms'

- Inanimate nouns
  
  Ex. 50
  1 á-wámné 'cross' 1-wámné 'crosses'
  2 á-kás 'zinc' 1-kwás 'zinc' pl
  3 á-fàtè 'a pair of scissors' 1-fàtè 'pairs of scissors'
5.2.1.5. Gender 9/10.

This gender consists of animate and miscellaneous nouns.

- Animate nouns

Ex. 51.

1. m-bélé 'caterpillar'  ṭse-m-bélé 'caterpillars'
2. ṣ-gāin 'girl'  ṭse-ṣ-gāin 'girls'
3. ṣ-gwá 'seed'  ṭse-ṣ-gwá 'seeds'

- Miscellaneous nouns

Ex. 52

1. m-múl 'swelling'  ṭse-m-múl 'swellings'
2. ṣ-dúm 'vagina'  ṭse-ṣ-dúm 'vaginas'
3. ṣ-gaín 'proverb'  ṭse-ṣ-gaín 'proverbs'
4. ṣ-gám 'week'  ṭse-ṣ-gám 'weeks'
5. ṣ-gē 'trouble'  ṭse-ṣ-gē 'roubles'
6. ṣ-dīg 'horn'  ṭse-ṣ-dīg 'horns'

5.2.1.6. Gender 5/13.

This gender groups nouns related to parts of the body, plants abstract and miscellaneous eg.

- Parts of the body nouns

Ex. 53.

1. ṣ-pé 'jaw'  ṭse-ṣ-pé 'jaws'
2. ṣ-tám 'heart'  ṭse-ṣ-tám 'hearts'
3. ṣ-dwá 'stomach'  ṭse-ṣ-dwá 'stomachs'
4. ṣ-tēg 'penis'  ṭse-ṣ-tēg 'penises'
- Plants related nouns

Ex. 54.
1 í-fú 'leaf' ő-ř-fú 'leaves'
2 í-pí 'kolanut' ő-ř-pí 'kolanuts'
3 í-tʃo 'palm frond' ő-ř-tʃo 'palm fronds'

- Abstract nouns.

Ex. 55.
1 í-tʃé 'intelligence' ő-ř-tʃé 'intelligence pl.
2 í-zaf 'illness' ő-ř-zaf 'illnesses'
3 í-fəm 'brain' ő-ř-fəm 'brains'

5.2.1.7. Gender 19/6.

This gender consists of nouns that can be grouped into animal names, plant related and miscellaneous nouns eg.

- Animal names.

Ex. 56.
1 ő-ř-támú? 'cat' m-támú? 'cats'
2 ő-ř-nêŋ 'bird' m-nêŋ 'birds'
3 ő-ř-pu? 'chimpanzee' m-pu? 'chimpanzees'
4 ő-ř-yəŋko? 'chameleon' m-yəŋko? 'chameleons'
5 ő-ř-kù 'rabbit' m-kù 'rabbits'

- Plant related nouns.

Ex. 57.
1 ő-ř-kà 'tree' m-kà 'trees'
2 ő-ř-tám 'fruit' m-tám 'fruits'
3 ő-ř-və 'mortar' m-və 'mortars'
4 ő-ř-zəs 'pepper' m-zəs 'pepper' pl.
- Miscellaneous.

Ex. 58.

1. áfá-kwás 'pimple'  m-kwás 'pimples'
2. áfá-kèlè 'button'  m-kèlè 'buttons'
3. áfá-tsétí 'hail stone'  m-tsétí 'hail stones'
4. áfá-tú? 'day'  m-tú? 'days'
5. áfá-pù 'chisel'  m-pù 'chisels'
6. áfá-ʒə 'god'  m-ʒə 'gods'
7. áfá-yèlè 'earring'  m-yèlè 'earrings'

5.2.2. SINGLE CLASS GENDERS.

There are two single class genders in Mmen. These are 5 and 6a. As has been mentioned in previous sections, nouns of this class have no plural.

5.2.2.1. Gender. 5.

This gender consists of nouns of group 5c. They can be grouped into abstracts, mass and countable nouns eg.

- Abstract nouns.

Ex. 59.

1. í-sàŋnè 'happiness'
2. í-tsèf 'beauty'
3. í-ʒə 'madness'
4. í-ʒə 'theft'

- Mass Nouns.

Ex. 60.

1. í-wùl 'rain'
2. í-wè 'grass'
- Countable nouns

Ex. 61.

1 ́zö  'quarrel(s)'
2 ́jí  'eye(s)'

5.2.2.2. Gender 6a.

Nouns of this class are nouns consists of liquids and non-liquids eg.

- Liquid nouns.

Ex. 62.

1 ́dzâñ  'urine'
2 ́dâm  'blood'
3 ́dzâñ  'castor oil'
4 ́yîñ  'breast-milk'
5 ́tssî  'pus'

- Non-liquid nouns

Ex. 63.

1 ́tîñ  'soil'
2 ́kâñ  'gun-powder'
3 ́kâj  'gravel'

5.3. GENERAL REMARKS.

As regards the discussion on the gender system of Mmen what stands out clear is that a majority of the genders comprise mixed nouns in terms of semantic content. Apart from genders 1/2, 6a and to a lesser degree 5/13 and 19/6 which show considerable consistency in semantic content, the rest of the genders contain nouns of various semantic origins.
This inconsistency in semantic content explains why semantic content alone cannot be an adequate and convincing criterion for determining noun classes since it is common to find nouns with different semantic contents belonging to the same class.

It is worth while noting that class 5 nouns need special attention since in some cases these nouns have their plurals in class 6, others in class 13 and others still do not have plurals at all (they are mass nouns). Nouns of class 5 which form their plural in class 6 and 13 constitute double class genders while those without plurals constitute a single class gender.
CHAPTER SIX.

6.0. CONCLUSION.

6.1. SUMMARY.

This project set out to describe in detail the Noun class system of Mmen.

Chapter 1 (the introductory chapter) handled the objectives and significance of this work. In this light, mention was made of the contributions that this will make to future linguistic studies on Mmen. Secondly, this chapter attempted to situate Mmen geographically and historically. Here the linguistic area of Mmen and its varieties were indicated. Mention was also made of the position of Mmen vis-à-vis its neighbours. Historically, a brief history of Mmen was given especially so, as it helps to explain how the names 'Mmen' and 'Bafmeng' came into existence. While the name 'Mmen' was found to owe its existence to the historical movement of the Mmen people from Tsute in Mbonge to Mwen (i.e their present site from which is derived the name Mmen), 'Bafmeng' is believed to have been given by people of Bali origin who came to Mmen as interpreters to the Germans who arrived this region before the first World War. This chapter also discussed the theories and methods of analysis adopted for this work. Here, the approaches used were identified to be both structural and generative. Lastly this chapter attempted a genetic classification of Mmen. It was revealed here that Mmen is a ring language belonging to the Niger-Kordofanian family.

Chapter 2 was dedicated to the sound system of Mmen. Although phonology does not constitute a major area of concern in this work, it was deemed necessary that the reader be acquainted with the sound system employed in this work. In this perspective, discussions here centered only on consonants, vowels, tones and syllable structure of words.
Chapter 3 was devoted to the noun prefixes of Mmen. Here, the criteria for identifying and distributing nouns into classes were stated. Noun prefixes were found to constitute one of the major criteria for this identification and classification. With the help of these prefixes, a total of 13 noun classes were identified. These classes are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 19. However, concord, gender and to a lesser extent semantic content also played a significant role in the identification and classification of nouns. In each case that a nominal affix was identified, its corresponding proto-ring form was indicated. In some classes, prefixes were seen to have alternants. Where possible, explanations were given to this effect.

Chapter 4 was concerned with the analysis of the concord system of Mmen. The term concord was used to refer to the agreement between the head noun and its satellites such as adjectives, possessives, numerals etc. Like noun prefixes, concord system was seen to constitute one of the major criteria for identifying and classifying nouns. In this chapter, it was revealed that while the rest of the classes have concord elements whose forms are similar to those of their prefixes, classes 5 and 9 have concord morphemes that are different in form from those of their nominal prefixes. It was also revealed that only classes 7, 13 and 19 remain clearly distinct in the sense that their concord elements are exclusive properties of these classes.

In chapter 5, the centre of focus was gender and semantic content. A total of nine gender distinctions were identified in Mmen. Seven of them (1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10 and 19/6) are double class while two (5c and 6a) are single class genders. Semantically, it was discovered that nouns with different semantic contents can belong to one class. However genders 1/2, 6a, 5/13 and 19/6, were found to manifest some degree of consistency in terms of semantic content.
In the course of this work, a few problems were identified. In chapter 3, the nouns of class 5 and 8 were discovered to have alternants in their prefixes. These alternants include the high vowel /i/- and the low vowel /a/- for class 5 and /i/- and /a/- for class 8. While a general vowel lowering process captured by PR.8 (section 3.2.5.) was used to attempt an explanation for the alternation in class 5, no adequate explanation was found to explain the alternation in class 8. However, the inability to come up with an explanation might have been as a result of limited data or absence of an exhaustive phonological analysis. These suggestions may, however, form the basis for future research.

Again, in this chapter, the nouns of classes 3 and 9 on the one hand and 10 on the other almost appeared to belong to two classes. That is, the nouns of classes 3 and 9 seemed to belong to a single singular class while 4 and 10 seemed to form the corresponding plural class. Looking at these classes, two tentative solutions appeared plausible:

i) that classes 3, 9, 4 and 10 constitute four different classes

ii) that they can be combined to form two classes only with 3 and 9 forming the singular of 4 and 10.

However, with the help of prefixes, concord and gender, an adhoc conclusion was arrived at; that classes 3, 4, 9 and 10 are four different classes. (see chapter 3: section 3.2.11).
Chapter 5 revealed that apart from genders 1/2, 6a, 5/13 and 19/6, which exhibit some degree of consistency in terms of semantic content, the rest of the classes are mostly pairs of mixed nouns. It was equally observed that the nouns of class 5a and 5b have morphologically marked plural forms while those of class 5c lack such forms.

It is the hope that this work will be of great value to linguists who might have to work on Mmen. The work, however, cannot be said to be exhaustive; as such any loopholes in it can be used as bases for future linguistic research.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.


