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The Noun Class System of Lefo'

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA
(Maitrise in Linguistics)**

By

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DEDICATION

To my Brother

Aaron Ekane Ebah

The path of Life is so slippery, thorny and full of snares.

Bustling with hope and ambition in your youth.

But alas! nipped in the bud by one of those life hazards

May God have Mercy on you.

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I would not end without thanking Mr. Metuge G.E. Roggy who typed the manuscript.

ABBREVIATIONS

CL	class
R Pron.	relative pronoun
Aux	auxiliary verb
Vb	verb
Poss	possessives
Dem.	demonstratives
AM	associative marker
S	subject
Sg	singular
P1	plural
T	Tables (charts)

symbols

* proto-Bantu

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This memoir² proposes to study the noun class system of Lèfó', a language of the Coastal Bantu Mbo cluster (A.15) spoken in Meme Division of the South West Province. In this introductory part, a socio-linguistic setting of the Bafo will be sketched, the language situated more precisely within the general Bantu, then a sketch of its phonology, the methodology and organisation of this study will be given.

1.1 SOCIO LINGUISTIC SETTING OF BAFO

The Bafo tribe is found in the administrative unit of Kumba Central Sub-Division of the Meme Division in (South West province in Cameroon, see map 1) For the purpose of this study the language and the people will here after be referred to as Lèfó' and Bafo.

1. Lèfó' is the name of the language spoken by an ethnic group in Kumba who call themselves bàfó. In administrative texts these people are referred to as the Bafo (also written as Bafaw). In this memoir Bafo will be used to refer to both the speakers of Lefo and to their geographic space.

According to District Officer R.W.M. Dundas (1922), Bafo is geographically situated northwards from Kumba town, in the Mungo river valley. This valley lies on the south western watershed of the Kupe-Mwanenguba mountain range (Hedinger 19847). The Rumpi hills are found on the western side of the valley. The river valley thereby forms a natural gap in the North-south direction from Mamfe and stretches southwards to the Atlantic sea at Tiko. Other physical features of the area include River Meme, from which the division takes its name, lakes Mwanenguba and Barombi Mbo. River Meme rises from the Rumpi Hills and flows on the western side of Kumba Central Sub-division, crosses Mbonge road, then flows into Ndian Division (cf map 2) Lake Barombi Mbo is situated a few kilometres north west of Kumba town.

The Bafo tribe is found in the equatorial region of Cameroon and as such enjoys heavy rainfalls for about half of the year and high temperatures throughout the year. The Temperatures increase in the dry season. The heavy rainfall gives rise to thick equatorial forest. The Area has rich clay soils covered with volcanic ash. White wash (earth) is found in some places and natives use it to paint their houses.

The Bafo tribe covers a geographical area of about One hundred and fifty four square miles with a population density of about 16 inhabitants per square mile, (Dundas R.W.M. 1922). Besides the settlers in Kumba town, most Bafo villages are found

along the Kumba-Mamfe road. One of the settlements on the Mbonge-Marumba road is known as Dieka.

The economic activities of the Bafo people vary from fishing in the rivers and lakes, hunting, weaving of mats, trading, to farming which is their principal occupation. The very fertile soils in this area account for the high productivity of crops such as cocoa, palmnuts, rubber, bananas, plantains, beans, corn, groundnuts etc. Plantains from this area have a specially good taste. ; As a result the Bafo staple food is plantains and koki beans.

The Bafo early contacts with Europeans gave many of them an opportunity to go to school. Almost every Bafo village has a primary school. The pupils from these primary schools have access to the many private and government secondary schools in kumba town. There are however too few of the much needed technical schools.

The Bafos have the following neighbours (map 3): the Banyangs and Bassosi on the north, Balong on the N. East, Bakossi on the N. East and East, Bakundu on the south and Mbonge Bakundu on the West. After many inter-tribal wars and the ensuing migrations, the Bafos now live in peaceful harmony with their neighbours. They intermarry and move freely from one tribe to another. These healthy contacts have given rise to borrowing between the languages in this area.

Kumba Town which is an out growth of the Bafo village of Kumbe Madike, is a cross-roads for the traffic to Fako, to Loum through Tombel, to Mamfe and to Mbonge-Ndian (see map 3). As earlier mentioned, motorable but untarred roads link the Bafo villages on the Kumba-Mamfe and Kumba-Mbonge roads. The roads in Kumba town itself are no better. They are very muddy and full of pot holes during the rains and extremely dusty in the dry seasons.

14 pages - includes 1/

1.2 BAFO HISTORY - Origin and Culture

According to Dundas (1922) before the Bafos, lived in Masue near Ekona, (map 3) they had inhabited a place called Bajo. Bajo is an area in upper Bakossi, on the western side of Bangem Sub-Division, sharing a boundary with Nyandong known as West Bakossi in Tombel Sub-Division.

Due to factors to be explained later, the settlement at Masue, (a place east of present day Kokobuma) did not last long. The Bafos soon moved southwards, creating settlements which came to bear various names (cf map 3).

The Bafos are said to have migrated for the following reasons:

a) Wars with neighbours made them move from one place to another in search of peace. A good example to cite here is their war with the Bakossis at Masue. Sometimes they moved in search of more fertile farm land. The land in Masue seemed not do have been fertile enough, besides the hostility of the neighbours.

b) Their migratory movement towards the south was motivated by the need to get closer to the source of European trade in salt, tobacco, rum, cloth etc.

Dundas (op.cit) situates the movement of the Bafos some centuries before 1922 when he carried out his studies. As the Bafos moved southwards they founded a number of villages along

the Kumba-Mamfe road (map 3). The villages below are said to have been founded by certain persons as indicated in each case.

- 1) Kokobuma founded by Esambe Ngung
- 2) Kombone Bafaw by Akwonjo and Ebaku Mayin
- 3) Dikomi by Elangwe
- 4) Kurume by Akamadibo
- 5) Bolo by Akpaw
- 6) Ikiliwindi by Nnoko Makene
- 7) Mambanda by Abwadiange
- 8) Kumbe Madike by Madike (kumba town)
- 9) Dieka on Mbonge-road by Esema Modua

The date of the founding of these villages are as yet unknown. The fact that the Bafos migrated from Bajo, suggests that they share a common ancestry with the present day Bajo people. What is certain is that there is a definite degree of affinity between Lèfó' and Akoose, the language spoken by Bajo people. A comparison of Lèfó', Akoose and Bakundu, another neighbouring language to Lèfó', shows a higher degree of genetic affinity between Lèfó' and Akoose than between Bakundu and Lèfó'. The similarity between Lèfó' and Bakundu is not any more so than that with the neighbouring Bantu languages.

As a basis for comparing the above three languages, a 17 item word list was elicited. It is presented in table 1 below.

Lèfó, Akoose and Bakundu cognates

Lèfó'	Gloss	Akoose	Bakundu
mó'	person	mó'	mótó
mwān	child	mwān	mwàná
dĩ'	eye	dĩ'	dísò
nyun	hair	nyun/nyen	nyôngà
éké	hand	éké/èkää	dika
nyān	nail	nyān	esòsò
ñlém	heart	ñlém/ñlém	mùléma
dín	name	dín/dìn	dína
ñtān	slave	ñtān	mofà
dyū	God	dyū	obasè
ñlām	wizard	ñlām	mùlémbà
ñkēn	guest	ñkēn	mùkè
mbúmbú	ashes	mbúmbú	mbû
mbèn	bamboo	mbèn/mbèn	
èsùm	grass	èsùm	ésúmbú
ndò	earth	ndò	munyèlè

nyà'

cow

nyà'

nyàkà

From the above data there is not one Bakundu lexis which is exactly similar to Lefó' as compared to the many Lèfó'/Akoose cognates.

1.3 SOME ASPECTS OF BAFO CULTURE

The Bafo people have dressed in varying manner through the ages. Before Europeans came, they used bark of trees to cover their bodies. The bark was beaten soft with sticks or stones, soaked in water, and then dried. When it was dry, both men and women tied it at the waist line to cover the lower part of the body. From waist line upwards was left naked, men and women alike.

With the advent of Europeans who brought clothes women began to tie a fathom of cloth round the waist. On top, they tied one end of a headscarf round the neck, knotting it at the nape. The whole headscarf fell to the front covering the woman's breasts and abdomen. She then took another headscarf, folded it and tied round her head. On occasions such as during the Dinyangi dance, the women would cut flowers and stick into the folded headscarfs round their heads. With time they replaced the fathom of cloth with a type of skirt gathered at the waist with the help of a rope. This skirt is called "wondo". Today the Bafo woman's traditional dress is the kaba.

The men transited from the bark of tree to a fathom of cloth. Today a Bafo man's traditional dress is a long sleeve shirt, over a big loin cloth. Then he ties a neckscarf. In addition, the title holders in this tribe who are known as "bà-fòn" do wear a red cap called "ulâ" carry a scepter "elô é di fòn" and a specially made flexible broom, during traditional

ceremonies. For ordinary use a "h-fon" wears a black cap known as "hkwètè" and carries nothing in his hand.

The typical Bafo dances are those owned by secret societies, for example the Nyangwe dance for Nyangwe society, Ngini dance for Ngini society and the Bolua dance for the women's secret society. The exception to these dances attached to societies is the Dinyangi dance which is a graceful dance, usually performed during occasions of joy such as weddings and births. It is said to be a fairy dance.

1.3.1 Birth Ceremony

When a baby is born, its mother and the baby are confided to a special nursing attendant. The attendant takes care of them until the mother becomes strong enough to take care of her baby. During this convalescence period, any relative or friend who comes to visit the baby is splashed with some cold water as a sign of blessing. The time which the baby and its mother spend in the nursing room varies from three to six months depending on the means at the disposal of the family concerned. The day the child is brought out is an occasion for feasting. People eat, drink and dance Dinyangi dance.

1.3.2 Death Ceremony

Death a natural but undesirable end of life in all human society, is received and handled with all befitting solemnity in Bafo community. A remarkable feature of death ceremony amongst the Bafos is the way title holders (bà-fòn) are buried. A title holder is buried inside a house by members of his own secret society only. Like in most Cameroonian communities, after a corpse is buried death celebration follows: people are served food and drinks. The secret societies concerned with the death in question then come out to dance. The dancing at this point demonstrates the philosophy of the continuity of life.

1.3.3 The Bafo Habitat

As explained earlier the climate of this area is generally warm and humid. The climate therefore conditions the construction of the houses in which the people live. Their houses are built with light materials such as thatches and bark of trees instead of bricks and stones. Thus they make use of available material within their immediate environment.

Generally a man builds one long thatched house. The walls are made of four layers of materials. On the outside is a wall of bamboos and poles. Next to it is a layer of thatches, then comes a layer of bark of trees which is finally covered with mats.

This four layer wall is very solid and keeps the house warm and tidy. Usually the long thatched house is partitioned into sections depending on the number of wives the man has. Each wife's section is further divided into a kitchen and a bed room. The man builds for himself a similar but smaller house behind the long building. The man's house known as "ekula" contains his own bedroom. Behind the long building, wood stores are built for each woman. Infront of the long house, a sitting place is provided with logs of wood or bamboo benches. Here visitors are recieved.

1.3.4 Typical Bafo dishes

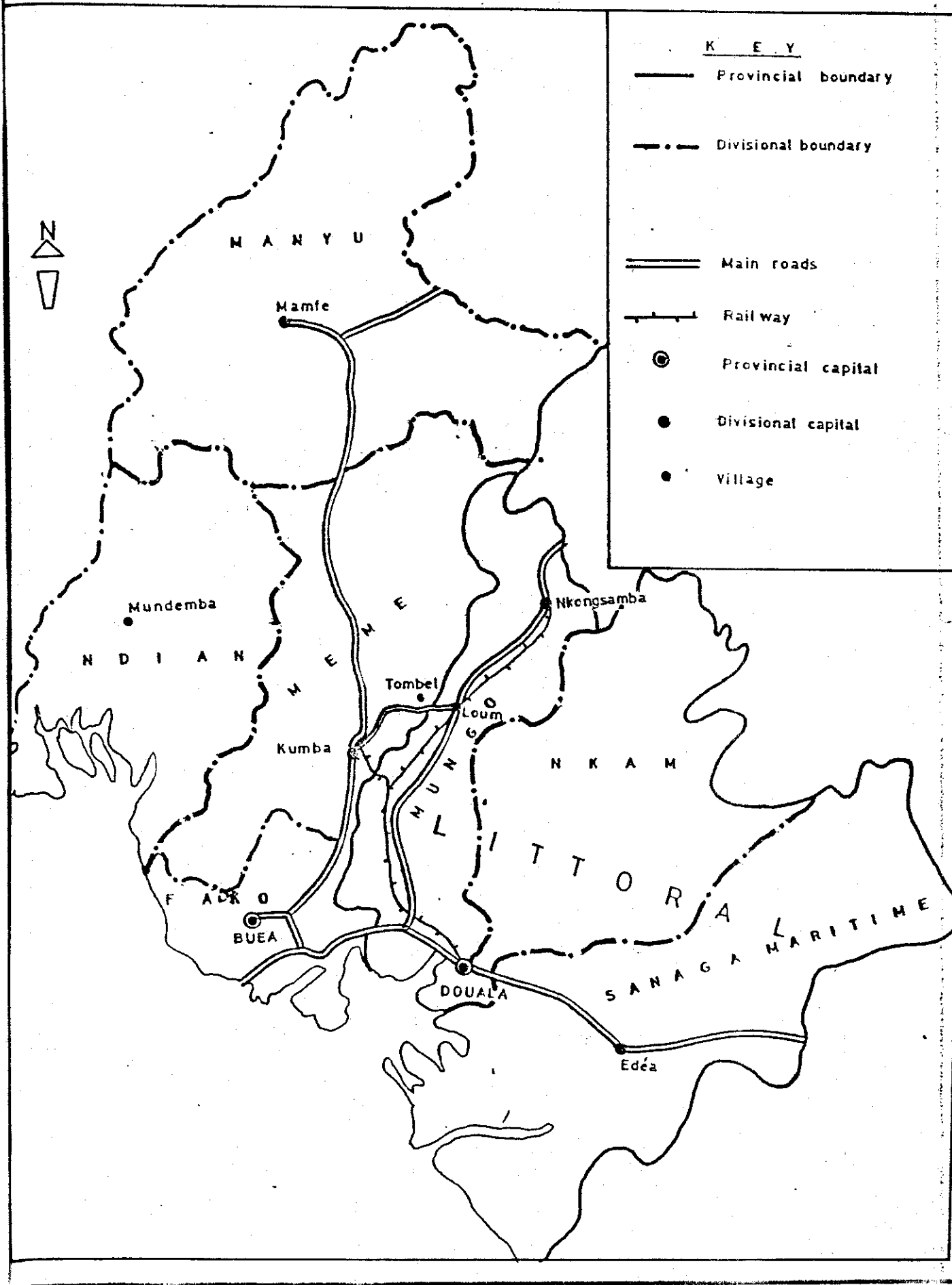
The list below (which is not exhaustive) indicates the vast and rich variety of Bafo dietary system. It comprises:

- 1) Koki beans and plantains
- 2) koki corn eaten with "mitôg" (colocas ia) or "màsú'" (sweet yams)
- 3) Ngolango (plantains mixed with meat, oil and spices)
- 4) Fufu cocoyam with ndúngà étúman (colocasias leaves soup)
- 5) Egusi pudding with local spices
- 6) Èlém (cocoyam leaves prepared with fish or meat and spices)
- 7) Raw bitter leaves with palm oil

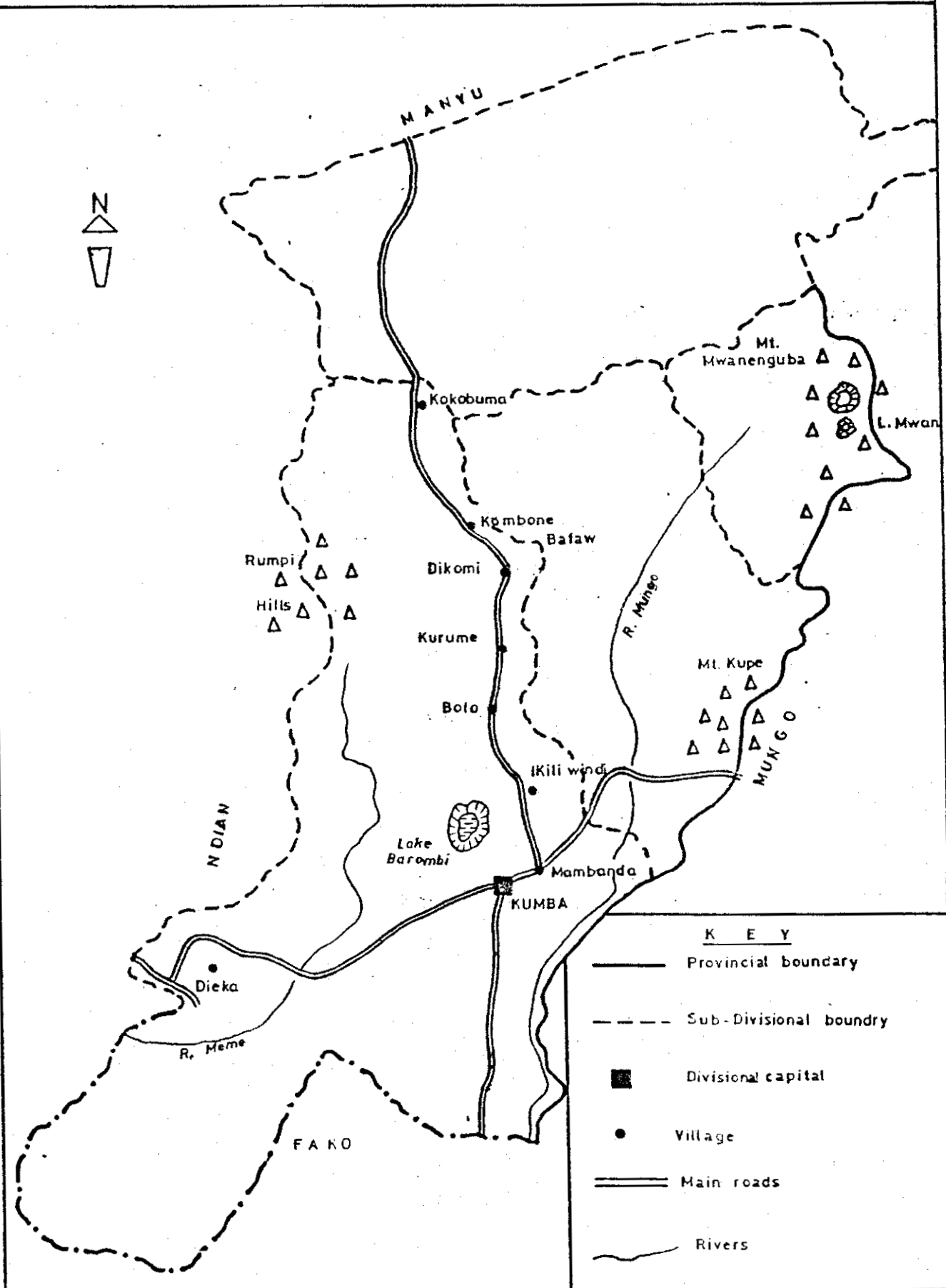
The presence of koki beans at important occasions such as weddings, has a special significance. Some people prefer a koki

bean wedding cake to a flour cake. The reason is that besides being original, the bean seed is known to be very prolific. It is therefore used as symbolic blessing on the young couple which is looking forward to procreation.

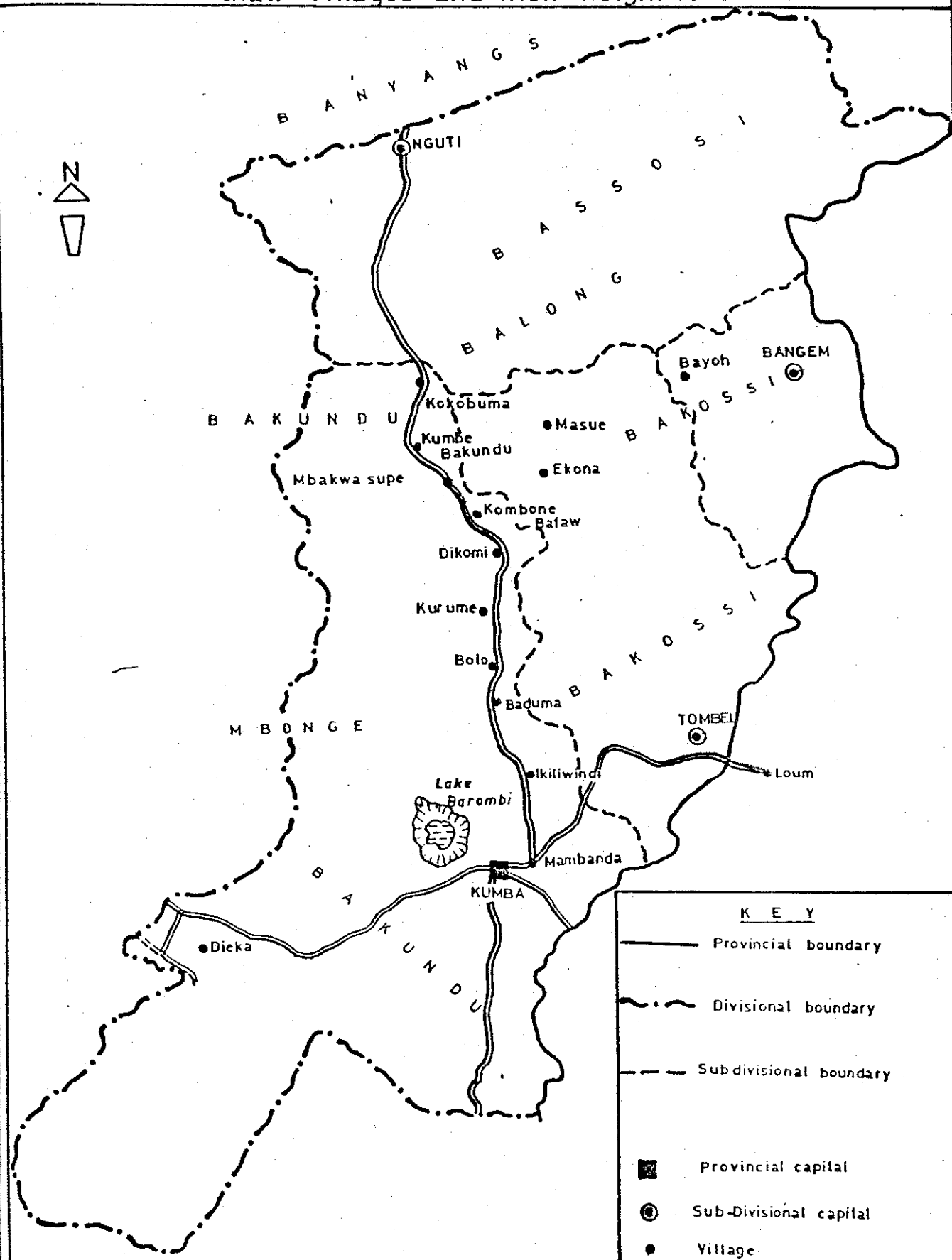
Map I ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF S WEST AND LITTORAL CAMEROON.



Map 2 MEME DIVISION: PHYSICAL FEATURES



Map 3 MEME DIVISION AND SUB-DIVISIONS
Bafaw villages and their neighbours



1.4.0 Linguistic Situation of Lèfó'

Greenberg's (1966) genetic classification of African languages puts them into four main families as follows:

- i. Congo-kordofonian
- ii. Nilo-saharan
- iii. Afroasiatic
- iv. Khoisan

The Congo-kordofanian is further sub-divided into Niger-Congo and Niger-Kordofanian. Niger-Congo has six sub-families namely: 1) West Atlantic, 2) Mande, 3) Voltaic, 4) Kwa 5) Benue-Congo and 6) Adamawa. Under Benue-Congo D. are included the following Bantoid sub-families Tiv: Bitare, Batu, Ngoro, Mambila, Bute and Bantu; Greenberg (1966) .

Lèfó' belongs to the Bantu languages of south west Cameroon, within the Mbo cluster (A.15) by Guthrie (1967). This cluster is referred to as Manenguba languages by Johnston (1919 and 1922), Hedinger (1987) (cf map 4) Lèfó' is given the name nho (641) in Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun (ALCAM: 1983), (see map 5 on page.20.)

The figure below is a sketch of Lèfó' linguistic ancestry following Greenberg's (1966) genetic classification:

Congo - Kordofanian



Niger - Congo



Benue - Congo



Bantoid



Bantu



N. Equatorial



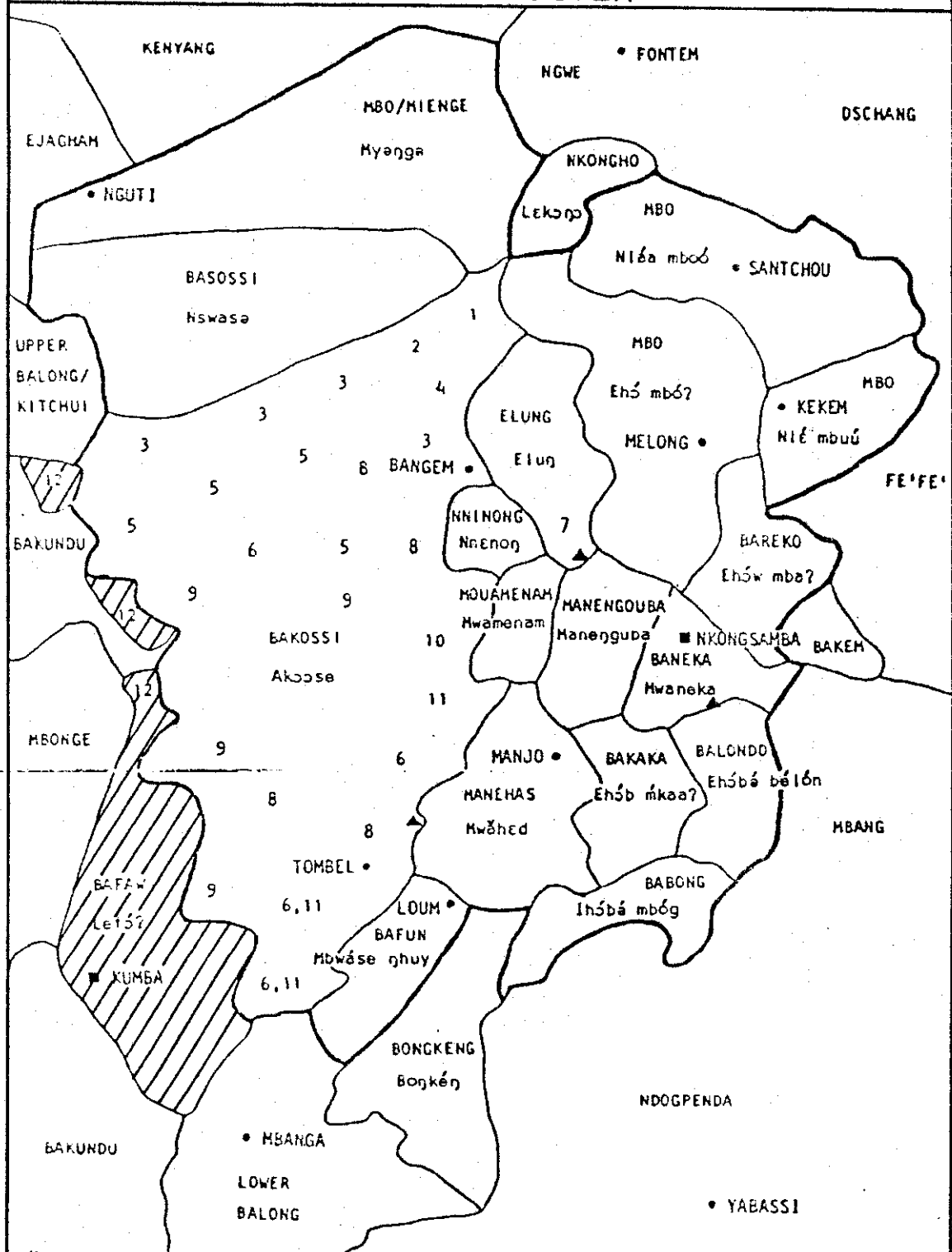
Coastal



Lèfó'

From informant sources Lèfó' has three dialects. There is upper Lèfó' spoken in the villages of Kokobuma, Kombone, and Dikomi. The villages of Kurume, Bolo, Ikiliwindi, Mambanda and Kumba, speak lower Lèfó'. Dieka has its own variety. It has not been possible to have illustrative data for these dialects.

Map 4 ETHNONYMS AND GLOSSONYMS OF
MBO CLUSTER



Key:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 1 Banyue | 7 Nhia |
| 2 Babubog/Babubock | 8 Muetan |
| 3 Ngemengoe/Ngeminu/Hwangen | 9 Manyue |
| 4 Ebanut | 10 Mwambong |
| 5 Mowogmut | 11 Mwasunden |
| 6 Muetug | 12 Bafaw |

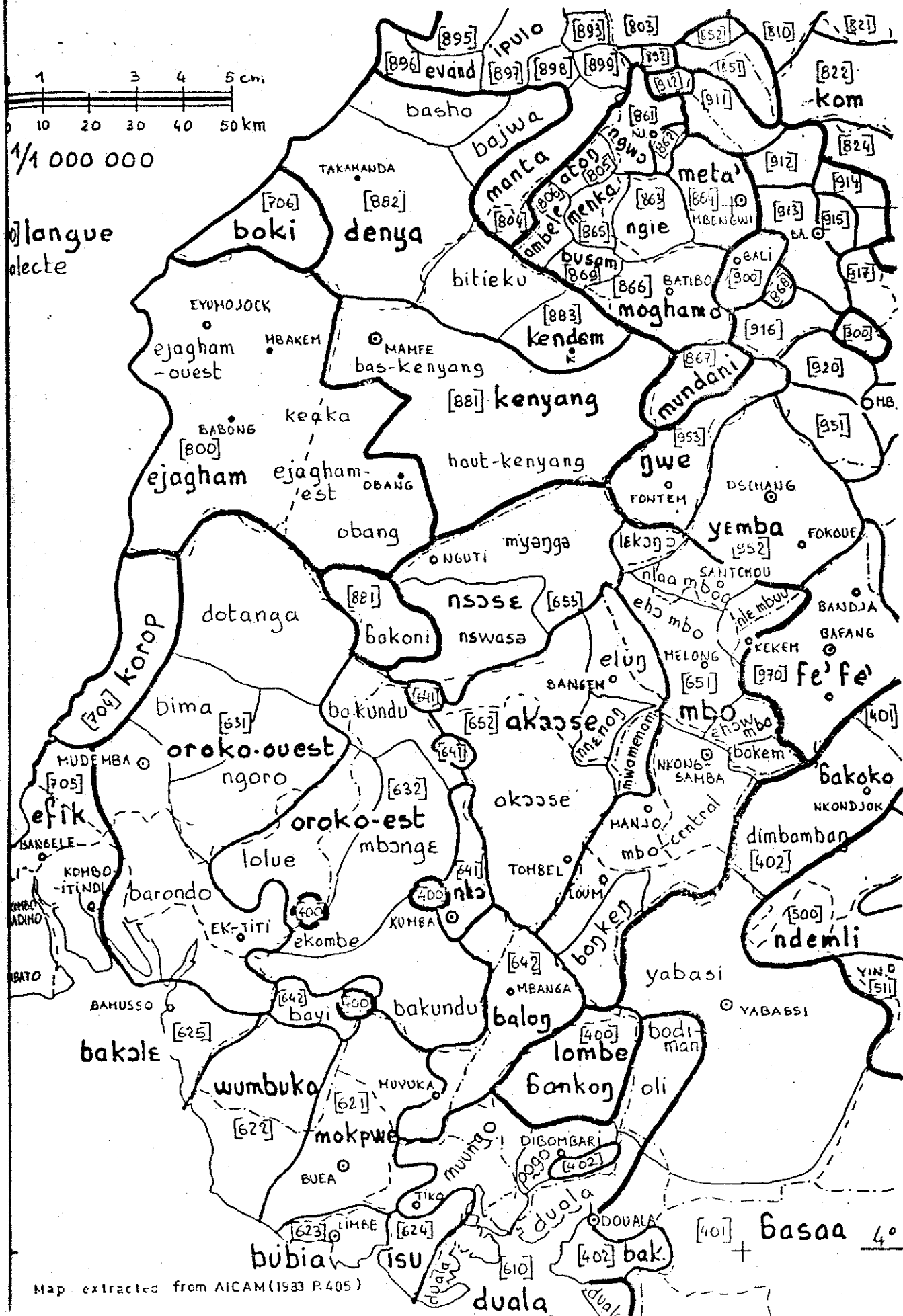
BASOSSI Names commonly used

Hswasa Glossonyms



Bafaw the area of study

Map 5 LANGUAGES OF S.WEST PROVINCE



1.5 A SKETCH OF LÈFÓ' PHONOLOGY

A detailed morpho-phonological study of Lèfó' is outside the scope of this work. However a brief study of the phonology of Lèfó' has been undertaken to facilitate the transcription of the data of this study. It would not be surprising if this served as a basis for future study. However the vowel, consonant and tonal patterns are sketched.

1.5.1 Vowels

"One of Guthrie's (1948) criteria for identifying a language as Bantu is a symmetrical vowel system: an odd number of vowels, including one low central vowel and an equal number of front and back vowels", Welmers (1973).

The following possible combinations among others are common:

a)	i	u	b)	i	u	c)	i	u
	I	v		e	o		e	o
	e	o		ɛ	ɔ			a
	ɛ	ɔ			a			
		a						

Lèfó' comes very close to the b) pattern above with the slight difference that Lèfó' has a mid central vowel [ə] in addition.

Lèfó' Vowels:	i	u
	e	o
	ɛ	ə
		ɔ
		a

The above vowels are attested in the following Lèfó' lexical items.

Vowel	Lèfó'	gloss
i	lîbî	"breast"
e	épùm	"fruit"
ɛ	éké	"hand"
ə	fǎ	"where?"
a	ā	"to, at"
ɔ	mò'	"person"
o	ebóbô	"a dumb person"
u	púsú	"to answer"

A survey of the word list used for this work reveals that the vowels / i, ɛ, ə, a, ɔ, u/ have a greater frequency of occurrence than vowels /e, o/. Vowel /i/ is hardly found in the initial position. Vowel /e/ is scarce. Apparently, /ɛ/ is used in most positions where /e/ could occur.

In Lèfó' vowel length is significant and will be indicated by sequences of two identical vowels (following Meeussen 1967)

makíí	"blood"
sáá	"his father"
lipúndêê	"chameleon"
fii	"camwood"
péém	"chalk"
sôô	"thatch"
wudúù	"night"
mbôô	"lake"

There is no example of an /e/ cluster. This may be evidence of its scarcity.

1.5.2 Lèfó' Consonants

The following chart depicts the consonants identified.

T 1.2 Consonants.

PLACE	Bila- bial	Labio dental	Dental Alveo- lar	Palato Alveo- lar	Pala- tal	Velar	Glott- tal	Labio velar
MANNER								
Stops	p b b		t d			k g	'	kp
Frica- tives		f	s	š	j			
Nasals	m		n		ny(n)	ŋ		
Pre-nasa- lized stops	mp mb		nt nd		nj	ŋk ŋg		
Laterals			l					
Approxi- mants	y					w		

The glottal stop is a very frequently used feature in Lèfó' as can be seen in the glossonym of the language. Many nouns in this work contain the glottal stop /'/. The pre-nasalised consonants are also a common feature as can be seen in the many examples of classes 3, 9 and 10 nouns.

The canonical syllable structure of Lèfò' can be sketched thus:
 (V) (C) V (C). The examples below illustrate the various
 expansions of this structure.

CV	pópo	"armpit"
	wùlù	"chin"
	fě	"where"
	ḃó	"they"
V	ā	"to, at"
	ē	"in"
CVC	fān	"here"
	sīm	"straight"
VCV	éké	"hand"
	élò	"spear"

1.5.3 Tones

Tones used in this work include:

- high tone
- low tone
- rising tone
- falling tone
- mid tones have not been marked.

Tones as used here express speech prominence. For instance
 the homorganic nasals are syllabic, hence bear a tone.

1.6 METHOD OF WORK

Data collection:

I copied a 709 word list from Hedinger (1987). With this word list I made a trip to Kumba to elicit the Lèfó' correspondences, in the singular/plural forms as much as possible. I also went to Buea achives to get documentation on Bafo history. When I came back to Yaounde, I cross-checked my data with other informants around. My informants included men and women of different ages. The ages of the men range from 24 years, 45 years, and above 70 years. The age range of women is 20 years, 35 years and 50 years.

I also made up a number of sentences which were translated into Lèfó'. The sentences were to enable me determine classes of nouns which were not obvious from the affixes or semantic criteria. This was particularly useful for classes 9/10 nouns.

Data analysis

I used Welmers (1973:165) proto-Bantu noun prefixes and semantic criteria to put Lèfó' nouns in the various classes. Then I made numerals, possessives, relative pronouns and qualifier charts. I put different classes of nouns on each of these charts and elicited the corresponding concords from my informants. At this stage all the noun classes and their concords were determined.

I then started writing up. When I realised that I needed to include maps in the study, I went to "Centre Geographique" to look for a map of Meme Division. I also got some Maps from ALCAM.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THIS WORK

Chapter I	contains the introduction
Chapter II	discusses the literature of noun classification
Chapter III	presents noun classes of Lèfó'
Chapter IV	is on Lèfó' gender system
Chapter V	presents the concordial morphemes of Lèfó'
Conclusion:	this is a summary of the work including a statement on research prospect

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON NOUN CLASSIFICATION IN BANTU LANGUAGES

The African linguistic scene with over 1600 languages must have been a formidable challenge, indeed a tantalising puzzle to early scholarship in general and to linguists in particular. To start with a number of early scholars posited a vast range of working hypotheses to account for the nature and classification of African Languages. In the words of Welmers (1973:3)

"...unparalleled in the study of languages any where else in the world, African languages have been beset by persistent hypotheses of language mixture, intermediate or transitional languages, substrata, pervasive external influence far in excess of what is usually recognized as normal, and innovative exuberance unmatched in recorded language history."

In this review, the views on African languages as constituting a jumble will be examined first and then focus will turn to those which hold that there is order and that these languages are traceable to a few proto languages. Finally the Bantu prefix shape, concord and gender systems will be reviewed.

2.1 THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE SITUATION: A Great Jumble

The first of these absurd notions is that of (Sir Harry Johnston 1919:27) who sees African languages as "A great jumble of events, and lo! - new languages spring suddenly into existence." For Johnston, (op-cit) languages scattered all over West Africa had noun class and concord systems similar to those of the well established Bantu. For him the most highly developed and regular Bantu languages represented the oldest and most original proto-Bantu type. In his speculation Johnston (op-cit) imagines some momentous and amazingly rapid process of fusion by which West African languages acquired entire chunks of Bantu morphological structures and basic vocabulary over night.

Other proponents of African language mixtures according to Welmers (op-cit) include Carl Meinhof (1940), E.O.J. Westphal (1957), M.A. Bryan (1959) Westermann (1952) and Malcolm Guthrie (1962).

Malcolm Guthrie (1962) who shares almost the same views with Johnston gives an alternative interpretation of Greenberg's genetic classification of Bantu and West Sudanic languages as, "the incorporation of Bantu features into languages of quite a distinct origin", in the form of "grammatical contamination" and "loan words". Guthrie's theory is based on earlier distinct classifications of Sudan and Bantu by Meinhof (1912) and Alice Werner (1915) (as found in D.T. Cole 1971:23), attributes Hamitic origin to West Sudanic languages and naturally sees no

genetic relationship between Bantu and W. Sudanic. The Reason for of this view of pervasive external influence of Bantu into West Sudanic can therefore be understood.

Another exponent of mixed languages is Carl Meinhof (1940:164) With his "Mischsprache" concept he suggests that Bantu is a hybrid language, descended of a Hamitic father and a Negro mother. This concept seems to be based more on cultural than linguistic considerations. Consequently it will not take any more of our time and space.

E.O.J. Westphal (1957) postulates that a language may be closely related to another language phonologically, to a second morphologically and still to a third lexically. Unfortunately no data has been presented to substantiate this claim and hence to give room for appraisal. M.A. Bryan (1959) a disciple of Westphal (op-cit) has used Westphal's theory to posit extensive language mixtures in Africa. Again evidence for this view was not available.

Another proponent of language mixtures in Africa is David Dalby (1966). In support of this theory Dalby rejects the traditional concept of genetic relationships and classification of languages. His examples of mixed languages are pidgins and creoles, e.g. Krio of Sierra Leone and Ma'a (Mbugu) in Tanzania.

Welmers (1973:3) explains that Dalby misconceived Greenberg's notion of genetic relatedness which implies

"genesis" or origin. Greenberg's "genetic relationships" refers to linguistic characteristics inherited by one generation of speakers from another. To bring home the point Welmers (op-cit) illustrates genetic relationship with this explanation: a language may be broken up by migration or invasion. Each part undergoes changes due to external influences. After several millenia the relationship will remain apparent in parallels discoverable by well-established techniques of comparative linguistics.

Welmers (op-cit) equally dismisses the theory of mixed languages in Africa with the following argument. Taking the supposed example of a mixed language Ma'a (mbugu) in Tanzania, a supposedly non-Bantu language which has adopted Bantu class and concord system. (Tucker and Bryan 1966 p. 270) Ma'a is also alleged to have a large Iraqw(Cushitic) vocabulary which is entirely nominal, while its verbs are of a different origin. (Tucker and Bryan 1957 p. 72) Welmers (op-cit) states that (from unpublished research sources by christopher Ehret) the development of Ma'a, though certainly unusual, is within the familiar framework of continuous language history with extensive external influence. Many Ma'a verbs, nouns and other words are of Cushitic origin. The gaps and inconsistencies of Bantu grammar in Ma'a suggest that this grammar does not belong to the mainstream of Ma'a history. It should however be noted that Ma'a didnot adopt Bantu grammatical characteristics in the abstract, they came into the language through the adopted vocabulary.

Welmers (op-cit) is equally reluctant to accept krio of Sierra Leone as an example of an African mixed language. His argument is that krio has a background of imperfectly learned English as it is obvious with young immigrant communities. Its phonology is similar to several West African languages, and has a grammatical structure that lacks many English characteristics but rather resembles that of West African languages. There is no homogenous African language from which Krio developed. It therefore has no genetic history. Krio grew from extensive coastal trade contact plus emancipated slaves who had different African backgrounds. These people needed a language with which to communicate within themselves and the English. Krio was born.

Having discussed the hypotheses of African mixed languages it would be good to look at the opposing view: the theory of genetic relatedness of African languages.

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2.2. THE GENETIC RELATEDNESS OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The most comprehensive and widely accepted classification of African languages is said to be that proposed by Joseph H. Greenberg (1963, 1966). Using the method of mass comparison of lexical items and their morphological forms, he grouped African languages into four main families namely: Congo-kordofanian, Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic and Khoisan. Striking similarities of the lexicon and their bound morphemes helped to determine the genetic relatedness of the languages. Welmers (1973:5) totally approves Greenberg's (op-cit) genetic classification. He however criticises the fact that Greenberg has not demonstrated the existence of regular phonetic correspondences among all the languages in any of the four language families he posited for Africa. Though such correspondences are the real proof of genetic relationship.

Taking a cue from Carl Meinhof (1912), Alice Werner in her book titled The language families of Africa, made a genetic classification. "The Five families of African languages", are presented as follows, (D.T. Cole 1971:23)

- 1) The Sudan family
- 2) Thge Bantu family
- 3) The Hamitic family
- 4) The Bushman group
- 5) The Semitic family

All the afore mentioned classifications have given Bantu a prominent place. This is due to the interesting nature of Bantu noun classification. Guthrie (1968-71) in his Comparative Bantu Linguistics..., is said to have chosen the Bantu languages for this kind of study, due to their perculiar geographical distribution and overall characteristics. According to him Bantu languages have a wealth of data: over 300 distinct languages with relatively simple grammatical structures, patterns of agreement and sound shape so easy to handle. Noun Classification is the basis of Bantu grammar.

2.3 MORE EVIDENCE OF ORDER IN THE AFRICAN LINGUISTIC SITUATION

Malcolm Guthrie (1967) in his article, "Variations in the range of classes in the Bantu languages published in La classification Nominale dans les Langues Négro Africaines, gives a stricking description of Bantu noun classes. According to him, the occurence of class concord by prefix is a feature so essential to the Bantu family that it becomes impossible to accept as fully Bantu any language in which this feature is missing. He defines "class" in Bantu as one of the distinct patterns of prefix agreement in the language in question, the actual prefix of the nominal being used as a reference form for the whole pattern of agreement. The number of classes in a language is thus determined by the number of distinct patterns of agreement. This explains why the number of classes vary from ten to about twenty depending on the language.

In the same vein, Richardson Irvine (1967:376) says that:

"Perhaps the most notable evidence of homogeneity in Bantu languages is the extent to which generally speaking, noun prefixes have retained identifiable shapes which enables the research worker to number them in a consistent manner with relevant ease through out the entire family"

Still in the same line of thought Welmers (1973:159) asserts that Bantu languages are the most commonly associated with noun class systems. Though Bantu is not unique in noun class systems, its large number of noun classes and their maximal grammatical functions are simply overpowering at a first glance. This appraisal is rounded up in the words of Greenberg (1966) who states:

"The trait of Niger-Congo morphology which provides the main material for comparison is the system of noun classification by pair of affixes, singular/plural. The Bantu noun prefixes are typical of this classification system."

In discussing the nature of Bantu noun classes, Richardson (op-cit) posits the theory of unidirectional evolution. This would imply a gradual process of logical evolution at a uniform rate. It is questionable as to whether a spoken language can actually evolve in this manner. In answer to this question Richardson (op-cit) says, the logicity of evolution in a language or language family can be proved only by reference to the systems into which it may be analysed or the degree to which these may be organized into a master system. In conclusion he says, even the most logical Bantu languages display lacunae, reduncies and other illogicalities which

result from various socio-cultural influences. Given that Richardson's theory is based for most part on the assumption of lack of evidence to disprove uni-directional evolution for Bantu, it is difficult to give his theory an objective appraisal.

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2.4 CRITERIA OF ASSIGNING NOMINAL CLASSES

Another factor which attracts attention is the criteria of assigning nominal classes in Bantu. This will also explain the fact that Bantu noun classification is not an arbitrary grammatical device.

2.4.1 The Prefix and Concord System

A study of the Bantu nouns reveals that most of the nouns have a prefix or suffix which agrees with other grammatical morphemes in a sentence. The shape of such a prefix e.g. mu/mi for classes 3/4, would be found on many nouns and thus be grouped together, in one class. There are therefore as many classes as the prefix shapes with distinct agreement patterns.

A second dimension of the grouping of nouns is the semantic categories. The semantic categories or genders can be identified within the prefix groupings. However the relation between the prefix shape and semantic category remains arbitrary. There is no justification for deciding that li/ma should be the prefixes for classes 5/6 and not 1/2 for instance. This apparent arbitrariness must have been instituted to create orderliness in presenting the nouns of various classes and languages.

The system of affixes is an inherent feature in Bantu languages and serves a number of functions. It fulfills the role which gender plays in languages like French. It indicates the

grammatical concords and cohesion in well formed speech patterns (Tadadjeu et al. 1988 p. 110-112). The system of affixes also provides typological data to establish genetic relatedness. Meeussen (1967) and Welmers (173) have each used the Bantu system of affixes to establish genetic affinity within the Bantu and to come up with proto-Bantu prefix reconstructions.

This chapter would not end without presenting an important feature of Bantu noun classification namely; the gender system.

2.4.2 The Gender System in Bantu Languages

The gender system is one of the features frequently used in classifying nouns. The notion of gender can be applied on most languages but at varying degrees and interpretations.

The word "gender" is derived from Latin "genus" meaning "class" or "kind", (Lyons 1968). Lyons further explains that the Greek and Latin three genders were the three main noun classes recognized in the grammar. Greek and Latin nouns were classified into three genders so as to account for two distinct phenomena: 1) pronominal reference, 2) adjectival concord and agreement.

For the same reasons the nouns of French, Italian and Spanish are classified into two genders, those of Russian and German into 3 genders and Swahili - a Bantu language, into six genders, etc. Pursuing his argument Lyons (1968) states:

"...it is a matter of empirical fact that in most languages that have gender (defined as a classification of nouns for pronominal reference or concord) there is some "natural" semantic basis for the classification. This is not necessarily sex. It may be shape, texture, colour, edibility, in short any set of "natural" properties"

This is the case of Bantu noun gender classification

"Natural" and grammatical gender fails to apply in Indo-European languages where even inanimate nouns are masculine or feminine gender as is the case in French.

French	Spanish	Italian	Gloss
le garçon	muchacho	ragazzo	boy
la fille	muchacha	ragazza	girl

Bantu noun gender with Lèfó' examples are discussed in chapter IV of this study.

In summary, this chapter has attempted to present some scholarly views on the nature and classification of African languages in general and the Bantu noun classes in particular. The Bantu system of affixes and concord agreement as well as the semantic gender systems have been extensively discussed.

One other thing that this chapter has tried to portray is the interest in the study of language classification and consequently the interest that the study of Lèfó' noun class system holds for scholarship in African Linguistics. It has also provided tools that will be used in the analysis of the Lèfó' language data.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 LEFÓ' NOUN CLASSES

3.1 CRITERIA FOR THE DETERMINATION OF NOUN CLASS BELONGING

The criteria generally used in Bantu noun classification and which will be used to establish LEFÓ' noun classes as distinct from each other are:

- the form of the noun prefixes
- singular/plural pairing
- nouns and their concording elements

According to Welmers (1973:166) the semantic notion of noun class belonging is also important in the classification of Bantu nouns. Following this notion, in a noun-class language, nouns generally group together into semantic classes. Thus there will be a class of humans comprising all nouns that are human such as man, boy, girl etc. There will be a class of body parts, longish objects, animals, liquids etc. Combined with proto-Bantu noun prefixes the noun classes of Léfó' can be discerned.

The following is a summary chart of noun class prefixes and some concords.

Column I: It shows the class numbers. These numbers include classes 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, and 19.

Column II: This column contains the corresponding prefixes for each class. A discussion of the prefixes with illustrative data is presented after the chart.

Column III This column depicts the proto-Bantu noun prefixes by Welmers (1973:165) Columns II and III are put side by side to ease comparison at a glance.

Column IV & v Column four gives sample nouns for each class and column five is the gloss of the nouns in column four.

columns VI & VII Six contains demonstrative pronoun concord for "that one". Column seven shows the possessive pronoun concord "my" for all the noun classes.

3.1 Noun Classes and some Concords

3.1.1 Affixes

CL	LEFO	PB	NOUN SAMPLE	GLOSS	DEM	POSS
1	mu/ N- mw-	mo-	n-tán mù-mâm mw-ăn	slave, son child	- anini'	- mýê
1a	ø	ø	sisé	father	- anini'	- mýê
2	bā-, b-	va-	bā-tán, b-ăn	slaves, children	- bani'	bámýê
3	N-	mo-	ŋ-ki	village	- muni'	n-mýê
4	mi-	me-	mī-ki,	villages	- mini'	mī-mýê
5	li-, di-	le-	lī-bī, di-lê	breast, stone	- mani'	má-mýê
6	mā-	ma-	ma-bī ma-lê	breasts, stones	- mani'	má-mýê
6a	mā-	ma-	mākīi	blood	- mani'	má-mýê
7	é-, e-	ke-	é-fún, bī-šê'	axe, feather	- yini'	é-mýê
8	bī-	vi-	bī-fún, bī-šá'	axes, feathers	- bini'	bī-nýê
9	ø	ne-	ká', mbên	antelope, bamboo	- ênini'	ê-nýê
10	ø	li-ne-	ká', mbên	antelopes, bamboos	- éyini'	émýê
11	dū-	lo-	dūū	latrine	- dīni'	dī-mýê
14	wū/wo bw-	vo-	wū-ti bw-in	bed, day	- buni'	u-mýê
19	fy-	pi	fy- ɔ'	wild pepper	- buni'	u-mýê

Fourteen noun classes have been identified in Lèfó'. Although the semantic criteria is generally useful it should be used with a lot of care. The reason for this is that nouns donot usually fall neatly into ^{semantic} classes as one would expect. Some nouns that are definitely human and should fall in classes 1 and 2, sometimes fall into the class of animals. The following irregularities were identified in the attempt to classify Lèfó' nouns by this criterion.

- parts of the body are spread in classes 3/4, 5/6, and 7/8.

CL	Noun	gloss
3	ñ-kwèn	"arm"
	ñ-lú	"head"
4	mī-kwèn	"arms"
	mī-lú	"heads"
5	lī-bē	"liver"
6	mà-sùŋ	"teeth"
7	ē-pēŋ	"thigh"
8	bī-búsá	"hips"

Welmers (1973) classifies names of plants and trees in class 3/4 but they are almost non existent in Lèfó' classes 3/4. Instead a few are found in classes 7/8.

Examples

CL	Noun	gloss
7	ē-lén	"palm tree"
	ē-šum	"grass (sg)"
8	bī-lén	"palm trees"
	bī-šum	"grass (pl)"

The above examples underscore the limited value of the semantic criterion. This also shows that there is dynamism and flux between classes.

3.2 NOUN PREFIXES

In this section each class will be discussed, showing the noun prefix, its alternate forms and distribution. As already stated the proto-Bantu prefixes used in this study are from Cole's reconstruction adapted by Welmers (1973:165)

3.2.1 Class I

The prefixes for class 1 are N-, mu- m-, mw. The corresponding proto-Bantu is mo-.

m- and mw- precede vowel initial stems:

Examples

m-ò'	"person"
m-àǎnyà	"sister/brother"
mw-àlân	"daughter"
mw-ǎn	"child"

N-, and mu- precede consonant initial stems:

Examples

mù- mân	"son"
mù- kâlâ	"whiteman"

N- (homorganic nasal) prefixes

Examples

ñ- kân	"guest, stranger"
ñ- kwi	"widow"
ñ- bindâ	"crab"
ñ- sún	"friend"
ñ- fôn	"chief"

h- lām	"wizard"
h- tāj	"slave"
h- jīb	"thief"
h- wū	"corpse"

3.2.2 Class 1a

The prefix for class 1a is ø- (zero allomorph) it corresponds to proto-Bantu ø-

Examples:

ø- sisē	"father"
ø- mmāā	"mother"
ø- aṇwǎ	"cat"
ø- ngūsē	"frog"
ø- nyām	"animal"
ø- sǎpwè	"mouse"

Proper names are considered as part of class 1a, Welmers (1973:100)

Examples

ø- ákwò	"Akwo"
ø- elòṅé	"Elonge"
ø- ntúbà	"Ntuba"
ø- dibó	"Dibo"

3.2.3 Class 2

The prefix for class 2 is ba- The corresponding proto-Bantu is va-

Examples

	b- precedes vowel initial stems
b- à'	"persons"
b- áányà	"sisters/brothers"
b- ǎn	"children"
b- álán	"daughters"
b- aṇwǎ	"cats"

ba- occurs before consonant initial stems.

Examples

bà - bùmán	"sons"
bà - kálá	"white people"
bà - kân	"guests"
bà - kwi	"widows"
bà - bindá	"crabs"
bà - sún	"friends"
bà - fôn	"chiefs"
bà - lêm	"wizards"
bà - tán	"slaves"
bà - jíb	"thieves"
bà - wú	"corpses"
bà - sisá	"fathers"
bà - mmáá	"mothers"
bà - ngúsé	"frogs"
bà - nyàm	"animals"
bà - sapwè	"mice"

3.2.4 Class 3

The prefixes for class 3 are N-, mw- and m-. The corresponding proto-Bantu prefix is mo-. The distinction between the homorganic nasal prefixes of class 1 and 3 is due to the fact that class 1 is singular of class 2 and class 3 is singular of class 4 nouns. The plural prefixes of class 1 are b- and ba- where-as that of class 3 is mi-

The prefixes m- and mw- occur in front of vowel initial stems. These examples have no morphological singular/plural distinction in Lèfó'. They include:

m- inyi	"bees"
mw- ini'	"tobacco"

N- examples in this group:

m- bumbû	"ashes"
n- dūkù	"bush"

Homorganic nasal prefixes [N-] are varied in class 3.
Examples of those related to plants.

n- lâ'	"branch"
n- tōŋ	"colocasia"
m- màn	"kernel"
n- kàngáá	"root"

Parts of the body:

n- kwèn	"arm"
m- pân dúi	"nostril"
m- bân mùké	"elbow"
n- ši	"vein"
n- lû	"head"
n- sù	"mouth"
n- lém	"heart"
n- jù	"penis"

Semantically the above nouns would be considered as falling into the class of longish things (but for a few exceptions).

Miscellaneous nouns of class 3

n- ki	"village"
n- kô'	"rope"
n- kōni'	"song"
n- kùlù	"fever"
n- kân	"scabies"

ñ- bā'	"parcel"
ñ- fán	"handle"
ñ- bǎà'	"language"
ñ- bú	"year"
ñ- bən	"valley"
ñ- dīm	"grave"
ñ- sam	"event"
ñ- šinga	"thread/twine"
ñ- dūmbān	"rubbish heap"
ñ- jī	"boundary"
ñ- tūm	"walking stick"

3.2.5 Class 4

The class 4 prefix of Lèfó' is mi-. Its proto-Bantu counterpart is me-.

Examples

mi- lā'	"branches"
mi- tōn	"colocasia"
mi- tūm	"walking sticks"
mi- mən	"kernels"
mi- kàngáá	"roots"
mi- kī	"villages/countries"
mi- kō'	"ropes"
mi- kōnī'	"songs"
mi- kùlù	"illnesses"
mi- bā'	"parcels"
mi- fán	"handles"
mi- bǎà'	"languages"
mi- mbú	"years"
mi- bən	"valleys"
mi- dīm	"graves"
mi- sam	"events"
mi- šinga	"threads"
mi- dūmibān	"rubbish heaps"
mi- jī	"boundaries"

mi- kwēn	"arms"
mi- kùn	"tails"
mi- kàn	"scabies"
mi- pən midūi	"nostrils"
mi- bən miké	"elbows"
mi- ši	"veins"
mi- lú	"heads"
mi- sù	"mouths"
mi- lém	"hearts"
mi- jà'	"intestines"
mi- jù	"penis"

3.2.6 Class 5

The Lèfó' class 5 prefixes are li-, di- which correspond to le- of proto-Bantu. Nouns with di- prefix in Lèfó' have the same concords as those with li- prefix. Class 5 has many nouns in Lèfó'. To ease reading, the nouns will be presented in sub-classes (semantically). Nouns which refer to animates

Examples

Li- bē	"liver"
li- bùm	"abdomen"
li- lámá	"buttocks"
li- bí	"faeces"
li- bōn	"knee"
li- bí	"breast"
li- sùn	"tooth"
li- šià'	"a tear from the eye"
li- yá	"birth"
li- wá	"death"
li- túmbá	"family"
li- bìn	"testicle"
dí- fé	"twin"
dí- in	"name"

dī- sūē diké "wrist"

The last three nouns and probably some others in the language have a di- prefix instead of the normal li-. Since this change does not bear up at the level of concords one can conclude that this is an innovation. For this class di- is a morphological variant of li.

Plants and related nouns.

Examples

lī- kākà	"burning coals"
lī- ffin	"forest"
li- yō'	"thorn"
lī- kâû	"cocoyam"
lī- bô'	"pumpkin"
li- šīá	"plum fruit"
lī- yuī	"fire wood"
li- kô	"plantain"
li- bī	"colanut"

Class 5 also has a sizable number of neutral nouns

Examples

lī- fī'	"pus"
lī- bân	"poverty"
lī- bân	"clouds"
lī- sín	"moon"
lī- fón	"fat"
lī- bī	"breast milk"
lī- káo	"yawn"
lī- šcmó'	"sneeze"

There are still some nouns of this class which could not be

fitted in any of the above sections. These are considered as count nouns.

Examples

lī- pundēē	"chameleon"
lī- pà'	"wing"
lī- kē	"egg"
lī- dŷā	"food"
lī- lēndē	"knife"
lī- sēsú	"comb"
lī- bà	"cloth"
lī- bēmā	"headpad"
lī- bū'	"place"
lī- būn	"farm hut"
lī- súi	"fireplace stones"
dī- lē	"stone"
dī- bū	"scorpion"

3.2.7 Class 6

The Class 6 prefix of Léfó' agrees exactly with that of proto-Bantu: ma- The only slight difference is in tone. Léfó' prefix carries a low-tone mà-.

Examples

mà- bē	"livers"
mà- bí	"faeces"
mà- sùn	"teeth"
mà- yā	"births"
mà- túmbā	"families"
mà- súē mà màkē	"wrists"
mà- kākā	"burning coals"
mà- yō'	"thorns"
mà- síā	"plum fruits"

mà- ffin	"forests"
mà- kǎù	"cocoyams"

There are also some nouns in class 6 which can be used only in the plural and not singular. They are:

mà- kàngá	"chest"
mà- fíndù	"soot"
mà- kún	"beans"
mà- tùm	"lies"
mà- sákàn	"thanks"

Miscellaneous

mà- pà'	"wings"
ma- kě	"eggs"
mà- dǎ	"food"
mà- lëndé	"knives"

3.2.8 Class 6a

Class 6a agrees in prefix and concord with class 6 as illustrated by the examples below:

1. mà-kíí(cl.6) má mē mò á nyú
blood (cl.6) is finished him in the body
"He is anaemic".
2. mà-dí' (cl.6a) á múè má bŭké á mbé
water to drink (cl.6) neg to be in pot
"Not much drinking water is in the pot"
3. Ba báki nkèn m-im(cl.6a) má múàmá'
they gave guest wine (cl.6) R. Pron is sweet
"The guest was given wine which is sweet"

The sentences above show that the prefix for 6a nouns is mà- same as its concord marker. There is therefore no

difference between class 6 and 6a from the point of view of prefix and concord markers.

The main distinguishing factor is semantic, in that class 6a designates liquid masses. It can also be added that class 6 is the plural for class 5, where-as class 6a is neuter.

Were it not for the long standing tradition of having a separate class 6a for nouns that designate liquid masses, Welmers (1973:166) there would not seem to be much argument in support of the distinction of classes 6 and 6a. Infact there is no formal distinction.

In Lèfó' only six nouns have been identified for this class.

mà- kīí	"blood"
mà- nýà	"urine"
mà- dí'	"water"
mà- dé	"river"
mà- šén	"stagnant water"
m - im	"wine"

3.2.9 Class 7

The prefix for this class is e-, which alternates with e-. The basis for this alternation is not obvious. There are however very few nouns with the e- prefix. The proto-Bantu prefix for class 7 is ke-. Lèfó' has a huge number of nouns in this class.

Animate nouns:

ø- kwi	"bush rat"
ø- mbwá	"dog"
ø- njò'	"elephant"
ø- nyā' è ndùkú	"bush cow"
ø- ngân	"crocodile"
ø- mbúl	"goat"
ø- ngwi	"pig"
ø- mbò'	"squirrel"
ø- nyò	"snake"
ø- mbàmbènyò	"viper"
ø- éso	"bush dog"
ø- kàm	"monkey"
ø- ká'	"antelope"
ø- kûm	"python"
ø- kwé	"snail"
ø- kú'	"fowl"
ø- kwí'	"parrot"
ø- ngàkà	"weaverbird"

This class also contains some body parts:

ø- ngù	"skin"
ø- nyun	"hair"
ø- ngóm	"throat"
ø- mbí'	"back"
ø- mbèn	"rib"

Insects also fall into this class:

ø- nyí	"louse"
ø- šíà	"soldier ant"
ø- sià'	"termite"
ø- pépèn	"cockroach"
ø- ngòken	"millipede"

Other nouns of class 9

ø- pāki	"paddle"
ø- ndūngā	"pepper"
ø- ngòm	"animal skin drum"
ø- ñtā'	"wooden drum"
ø- là'	"ladder"
ø- lònge	"life"
ø- ebūlū	"work"
ø- mbū'	"fear"
ø- mbàn	"facial marking"
ø- nginyē éduū	"thunder"
ø- ngūngū	"wind"
ø- ngòn	"moon"
ø- ngòn	"month"
ø- ndūkù	"bush"
ø- ndò'	"earth"
ø- nlò'	"mud"
ø- pāém	"chalk"
ø- ndā'	"home"
ø- nyàm	"meat"
ø- ngòòlì	"voice"

Class 9 is the singular of class 10. However the classes 9 and 10 singular plural dichotomy is not morphologically evident at the level of noun prefixes, since both classes have [ø-] zero allomorph prefix. Their difference is noticeable only in the concords and tone configurations on these concords. In other words, the difference between classes 9 and 10 is distinct only in context. In a sentence class 9 recapitulative subject pronoun *c* takes a low tone while the same form for class 10 takes a high tone, as in the few examples below:

1) kwi è wùli
a bushrat is dead

kwi è wùli
bushrats are dead

2) nyǎ' è ndùkú è nani nsòngò sòngò
a buffalo has chased a hunter

nyǎ' è ndùkú é nani nsòngò sòngò
buffalos have chased a hunter

3) kûm è wúkàn mbú'
a python instils fear

kûm é wúkàn mbú'
pythons instil fear

4) síè è dýà bém bē ndá'
a termite eats household property

síè é dýuà bém bē ndá'
termites eat household property

5) ngòkén è nènè hòmé ub ufè
a millipede likes humid areas

ngòkén é nènè hòmé ubē ufè
millipedes like humid areas

Under inanimate nouns of class 9, are found a number of non count nouns which of course cannot be used in the plural form even in context. Some examples of class 9/10 non count nouns in context include:

- 1) ā wòŋi nyún ē fīndā
 she has hair black
- 2) nyàm ē yàndànē jita
 meat was bought alot
- 3) nginyé éduū ē labi bwà
 thunder has stroke a tree

3.2.12 Class 10

The Lèfō' class 10 prefix is ø- and that of proto-Bantu is li-/ne-. As already explained, class 10 (i.e. plural of class 9) has the same noun forms. Some examples of class 10 nouns include.

ø- mbwá	"dogs"
ø- ngwi	"pigs"
ø- ngòm	"porcupines"
ø- nyō	"snakes"
ø- njō'	"elephants"
ø- kwi	"bush rats"
ø- kēm	"monkeys"
ø- kâ'	"antelopes"
ø- kwé	"snails"
ø- kú'	"fowls"
ø- ngàkà	"weaver birds"
ø- mbèn	"ribs"
ø- nyí	"lice"
ø- síà	"solder ants"
ø- pépèn	"cockroaches"
ø- páki	"paddles"
ø- ngòm	"animal skin drums"
ø- ñtè'	"wooden drums"

ø- là'	"ladders"
ø- mbàn	"facial markings"
ø- ngòn	"months"

3.2.13 CLASS 11

The Lèfó' prefix for this class is du- and that of proto-Bantu is lo-. Lèfó' class 11 is rather poor, having very few nouns. Class 6 is the plural for this class. Examples found are:

dú-ì	"nose"
dù-ì	"latrine"
dũ-lù	"sun"
dw-è	"laughter"

The plural forms of the above nouns are as follows:

ma-dú-ì	"noses"
ma-dù-ì	"latrines"

Only two of the nouns have plural forms. The last two are non-count nouns.

3.2.14 Class 14

The Lèfó' class 14 prefixes are wu- and bw-. The proto-Bantu class 14 prefix is vo-. This is another class of miscellaneous nouns.

bw- precedes vowel initial stems as in:

bw- ălù	"canoe"
bw- ă	"medicine"
bw- in	"day"
bw- ă	"tree"

wu- has an alternation with wo-. Only one example with wo- has been found; wò- wē "marriage". Other examples with wu- prefix include:

wù- dūù	"night"
wù- kù	"mountain"
wù- ti	"bed"
wù- kǎ'	"fence"
wù- ya'	"pangolin"
wù- nòn	"bird"
wù- kàn	"onion"
wù- lám	"trap"
wù- yō	"fish hook"
wù- tū'	"pregnancy"
wù- mwè	"finger"
wù- tòn	"navel"
wù- sià	"plum tree"

Class 14 also contains abstract nouns and nouns which designate uncountable objects.

wù- sòn	"shame"
wù- dúm	"debt"
wù- yà'	"length"
wù- dī'	"weight"
wù- yō	"sleep"

Uncountable objects

wù- yūi	"honey"
wù- kwā	"salt"
wù- ndi	"rice"

3.2.15 Class 19

The class 19 prefix in Lèfó' is fy- and its proto-Bantu counterpart is pi-. Class 19 like 11 has few nouns. Only three nouns were found for this class

fy- ángú'	"sand"
fy- ěn	"mushroom"
fy- ǒ'	"wild pepper"

In southern Bantu languages like Akóse noun classes (Hedinger 1980), class 19 is considered the singular gender of class 13 plural. In Lèfó' class 19 nouns have no plural prefix.

3.2.16 Locatives in Lèfó'

The search for locatives in Lèfó' did not go far in depth due to time constraints, however for the word "place" which is jũmà in proto-Bantu according to C. Gregoire (1975), fǒm was elicited for Lèfó'. Since Akóse has hǒm Hedinger (1983:8), it seems that comparatively Lèfó' is not too distant from proto-Bantu, as /f/ could be reconstructed from *j in the same way as /h/ in Akóse. Tentatively fǒm could be assigned to class 16.

The locative prepositions in Lèfó' come very close to general Bantu á "to, at" This closeness is manifest in Akóse/Lèfó'.

Examples

Akooose	Lèfó'	Gloss
á	á	"to, at"
átè	átè	"inside"
á sè	áši	"under"
á mín	ámín	"on top"

The locative prepositions á, "to, at" é "in" and locative adverbials; fán "here", fání "there" and wúní "overthere" indicate place relationship with objects. Examples in context:

Prepositions

á ndá'	"at home"
á pòbwí	"to the stream"
á bwín bà sòndé	"on Sunday"
é wúlám	"in a trap"
wúdúù étè	"in the middle of the night"
èyûm étin	"in the dry season"
átè:á ndá'itè	"inside the house"
áši,á wùti ši	"under the bed"
ámín;á bwè mín	"on top of the tree"

Locative adverbs

wùti fán	"this bed here"
wùti fání	"that bed there"
wúkù wúni	"that mountain over there"

Besides, the following expressions of two locatives together were elicited.

ámín wúni	"up there"
átè fán	"inside here"
áfáni mín	"there on top"

There is also the locative interrogative: áfé "where?"

áfē kēni

"where are you going to?"

áfē ā dí

"where is he?"

With the above threshold data, locatives in Lèfō'
remain an area for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Definitive

4.0 GENDERS

In Bantu languages singular/plural pairings are sometimes referred to as genders. For example genders 1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 14/6 etc (Lyons John 1968). Abstract and mass nouns such as strength, blood, and water, for which enumeration is irrelevant are considered as single class gender or neuter. On the other hand nouns like child, head, butterfly etc, which have a singular/plural distinction are termed double class genders.

It should be recalled here that gender in this context differs from that in Indo-European languages. In those languages gender implies masculine/feminine opposition. In French for instance every thing is either "le" (masculine) or "la" (feminine).

4.1 GENDERS IN LEFO'

As indicated earlier, there is beside morphological criteria, semantic criteria for noun classification. In Bantu linguistics the following semantic classes have been discerned in proto-Bantu (Following Welmers 1973, and Richardson: 1967)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1/2 | Human beings |
| 3/4 | trees and plants plus a variety of inanimates |

- 5/6 miscellaneous, including animals, birds,
 fruits, with augmentative significance
- 6a liquid masses
- 7/8 miscellaneous with diminutive significance
- 9/10 most animal names, a variety of inanimates, few
 personal names.
- 11 long thin objects plus abstracts
- 12/13 frequently diminutives
- 14 commonly abstract, plus "alcoholative"
- 15 verbal infinitive, functioning as a noun
- 16, 17, 18 locative classes, appear only in concordial
 system in some languages
- 19 diminutive, singular class
- 20 usually augmentative, sometimes diminutive
- 21 augmentative and pejorative, uses class 5 concords
- 22 plural of class 20 and a few class 5
- 23 locative which combines with prefixes of many
 other classes

A semantic definition of gender in Lèfó' is however not so clear cut. As earlier mentioned, only the following semantic groupings have emerged with a lot of flux and fuzziness.

- a) Nouns with a human referent are found in gender 1/2
- b) paired body parts are spread in genders 3/4, 5/6, 7/8 and
11/6
- c) most animal nouns are in gender 9/10

d) Liquids are in gender 6a

The Notion that noun genders are all determined semantically does not find much support in today's Lèfò' data. The more reliable criteria for the determination of genders are the systems of affixes and concords. This is clearly born out in Lèfò' data for genders 1/2, 14/6, 7/6, 9/8, 9/10 etc.

The Double and single class genders are presented with examples as follows.

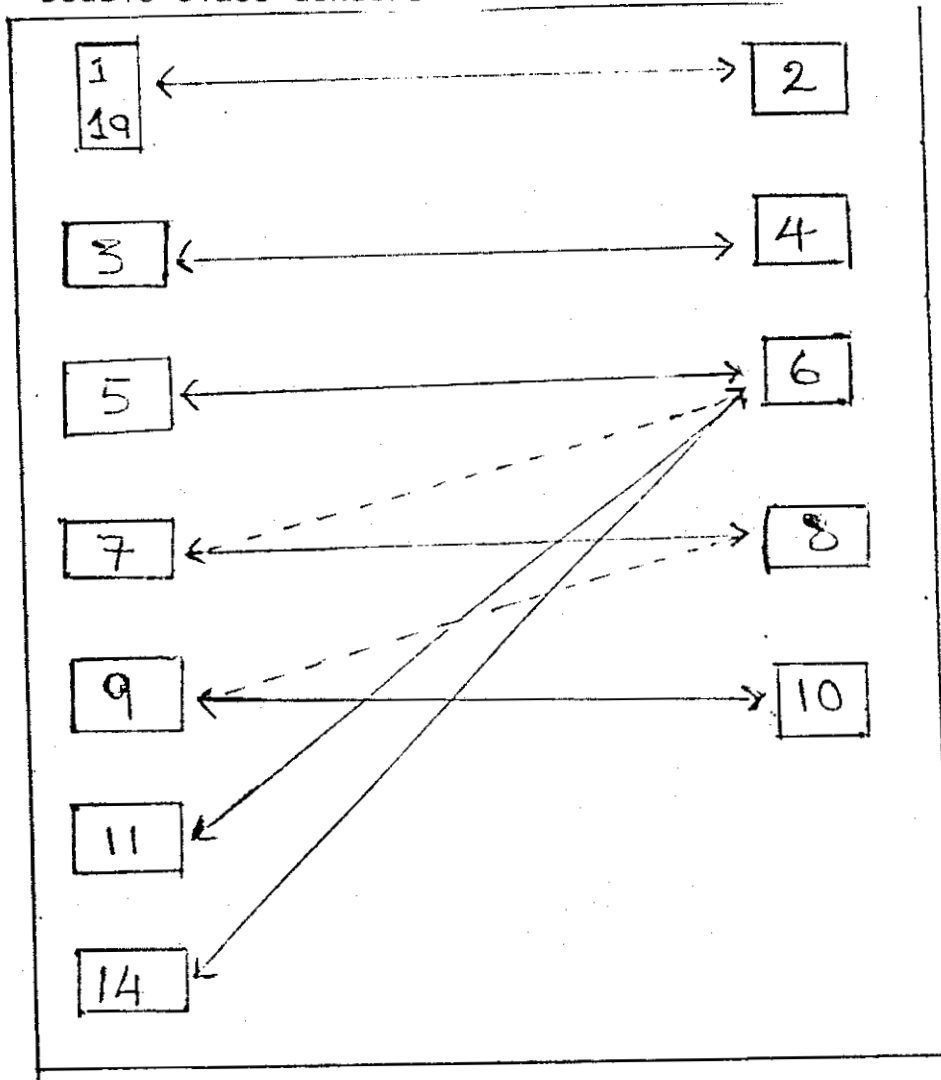
4.1.1 The DOUBLE class Genders

According to this study there are 9 double class genders in Lèfò'. These genders are illustrated by table 4.1 on the next page. The numbers on the left side are for the singular classes and those on the right for the plurals. The gender pairs are connected by lines. Dotted lines indicate pairs with very few examples or the irregular pairings such as 9/8, 7/6. Their normal pairs are 9/10 and 7/8.

The nine double class genders are as follows:

1(a)/2
3/4
5/6
7/8
7/6
9/10
9/8
11/6
14/6

T4.1 Double Class Genders



From the above table it can be observed that class 6 is the most widely used plural. It is a plural for four out of the eight singular classes namely 5, 7, 11 and 14.

Gender 1(a)/2 N-, ø-, ba-

Gender 1a/2 designates kinship terms and personal names

mw- àlân	b- àlân	"daughter(s)"
mw- ãn	b- ãn	"child(ren)"
m- ô'	b- à'	"person(s)"
ñ- sún	ba- sún	"friend(s)"
ñ- lêm	ba- lêm	"wizard(s)"
ñ- fôn	ba- fôn	"chief(s)"
ñ- tân	bà- tân	"slave(s)"
n- júm	bà- júm	"husband(s)"
n- wú	bà- wú	"corpse(s)"
ø- sisê	bà- sisê	"father(s)"
ø- mmáá	bà- mmáá	"corpse(s)"

Some animal names are included in this gender:

ø- aŋwá	b- aŋwá	"cat(s)"
ø- sâpwê	bà- sâpwê	"mouse/mice"
ø- ngúsê	bà- ngúsê	"frog(s)"
ø- nyam	bà- nyam	"animal(s)"

Gender 3/4 N-, mi-

This gender contains a variety of inanimate nouns, nouns related to plants and some parts of the body.

A variety of inanimates

ñ- kí	mi- ki	"village(s)"
ñ- byâ'	mi- byâ'	"language(s)"
m- òn	my- òn	"bracelet(s)"
ñ- fân	mi- fân	"handle(s)"
ñ- šinga	mi- šinga	"thread(s)"
ñ- jì	mi- jì	"boundary(nes)"
ñ- túm	mí- túm	"walking stick(s)"

h- sam	mi- sam	"event(s)"
h- dim	mi-dim	"grave(s)"
m- bā'	mi- bā'	"parcel(s)"

Names related to plants

h- lā'	mi- lā'	"branch(es)"
h- tōŋ	mi- dtōŋ	"colocasia(s)"
m- mən	mi- mən	"kernel(s)"

Parts of the body

m- pən dúi	mi- pən midúi	"nostril(s)"
h- kwèn	mi- kwèn	"arm(s)"
h- ší	mi- ší	"vein(s)"
h- lú	mi- lú	"head(s)"
h- sù	mi- sù	"mouth(s)"
h- jà	mi- yà	"intestine(s)"
h- jù	mi- jù	"penis"
h- lém	mi- lém	"heart(s)"

Gender 5/6 li-, mà-

Nouns with human referent

li- bùm	mà- bùm	"abdomen(s)"
li- lāmbá	mà-lāmbá	"buttock(s)"
li- sùŋ	mà- sùŋ	"teeth"
li- yá	mà- yá	"birth(s)"
li- ssèsú	mà- sèsú	"comb(s)"
li- wá	mà- wá	"death(s)"
li- túmbá	mà- túmbá	"family/families"
dī- fē	mà-fē	"twin(s)"

Nouns associated with plants

li- kākà	mà- kākà	"burning coal(s)"
li- fín	mà- fín	"forest(s)"
li- yō'	mà- yō'	"thorn(s)"
li- bō'	mà- bō'	"pumpkin(s)"
li- šíá	mà- šíá	"plum fruit(s)"

lī- yuī	mà- yūi	"firewood(s)"
lī- kō	mà- kō	"plantain(s)"
lī- bī	mà- bī	"colanut(s)"

Miscellaneous nouns of gender 5/6

lī- púndēē	mà- pundēē	"chameleon(s)"
lī- pà'	mà- pà'	"wing(s)"
lī- ké	mà- ké	"egg(s)"
lī- dýá	mà- dýá	"food"
lī- lēndē	mà- lēndē	"knife/knives"
lī- bŭn	mà- bŭn	"farm hut(s)"
lī- sūi	mà- sūi	"fireplace stone(s)"

Gender 7/8 é-, bī-

Nouns which denote parts of the body.

é-pən	bī- pən	"thigh(s)"
é- yém	bī- yém	"tongue(s)"
é- tù	bī- tù	"shoulder(s)"
é- fī	bī- fī	"bone(s)"
é- jù	bī- jù	"vagina(s)"

Other nouns of gender 7/8

é- sá'	bī- sá'	"prong(s) of porcupine(s)"
é- kàkàn	bī- kàkàn	"insect(s)"
é- kwi	bī- kwi	"yam(s)"
é- lén	bī- lén	"palm tree(s)"
é- fŭn	bī- fŭn	"axe(s)"
é- bŭn	bī- bŭn	"box(es)"
é- díbàn	bī- díbàn	"key(s)"
é- támbi	bī- támbi	"shoe(s)"
é- fyôn	bī- fyôn	"broom(s)"
é- yàlà	bī- yàlà	"word(s)"
é- wú	bī- wú	"death ceremony(ies)"

Gender 7/6 ɛ-, mà-

Only two examples were found for this gender

é- kě	mà- kě	"hand(s)"
é- kwí	mà- kwí	"leg(s)"

Gender 9/10 ø-, ø-,

Animal names

ø- kwi	ø- kwi	"bush rat(s)"
ø- mbwá	ø- mbwá	"dog(s)"
ø- njò'	ø- njò'	"elephant(s)"
ø- ngwi	ø- ngwi	"pig(s)"
ø- mbò'	ø- mbò'	"squirrel (s)"
ø- nyà'	ø- nyà'	"cow(s)"
ø- kûm	ø- kûm	"python(s)"
ø- kwé	ø- kwé	"snail(s)"

Other nouns of gender 9/10

ø- ndá'	ø- ndá'	"home(s)"
ø- ší	ø- ší	"sore(s)"
ø- síê	ø- síê	"termite(s)"
ø- ké'	ø- ké'	"cashew nut(s)"
ø- nyí	ø- nyí	"louse/lice"
ø- kwí	ø- kwí	"parrot(s)"
ø- ñtâ'	ø- ñtâ'	"wooden drum(s)"
ø- là'	ø- là'	"ladder(s)"
ø- ngòòlí	ø- ngòòlí	"voice(s)"
ø- mbèn	ø- mbèn	"rib(s)"

Gender 9/8 ø-, bí-

There are few examples of class 9 nouns which have a class 8 plural. Only two cases have been found.

ø- yǝ'	bí- yǝ'	"boil(s)"
ø- kúkwêlí'	bí- kúkwêlí'	"tortoise/turtle"

Gender 11/6 du-, mà-

Generally class 11 has few nouns in Lèfó'. This fact affects the number of nouns in gender 11/6 aswell, though class 6 is the only plural for class 11. Three examples were found:

dū-i	mà- dūi	"nose(s)"
dù-i	mà- dùì	"latrine(s)"
dý- ùm	mu- màbē	"ten/twenty"

Gender 14/6 wu-/bw-, mà-

wu- dūù	mà- dūù	"night(s)"
wù- kù	mà- kù	"mountain(s)"
wù- tí	mà- tí	"bed(s)"
wu- kâ'	mà- kâ'	"fence(s)"
wu- ya'	mà- ya'	"pangolin(s)"
wu- nòn	mà- nòn	"bird(s)"
wù- lám	mà- lám	"trap(s)"
wu- yò	mà- yò	"fish hook(s)"
wù- mwê	mà- mwê	"finger(s)"
wò- wé	mà- wé	"marriage(s)"
bw- in	mà- dù	"day(s)"
bw- è	mà- bwè	"tree(s)"

It should be noted that whereas the plural mà- replaces the wu- singular prefix in most of the items above, this is not true of the last item. The mà- prefix is instead a sort of double prefix to the singular prefix bw-.

4.1.2 The Single Class Genders

There are nine single class genders in Lèfó'. These classes include: 1a, 3, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 11, 14, and 19. Though class 6 is a plural class for many singular classes, it contains some plural nouns which do not have singular forms in Lèfó'.

Gender 1a ø-

The single gender 1a contains only proper nouns such as:

ø- ngó	"Ngoh"
ø- sona	"Sona"
ø- epýē	"Epie"
ø- elāngwe	"Elangwe"
ø- akāma	"Akama"

Gender 3 N-

Single gender 3 nouns have no plural forms in Lèfó' as in the following examples:

m- bũmbũ	"ashes"
n- dúkù	"bush"
n- jũmbi	"oil trough"

Gender 5 lĩ-

This class gender is made up mostly of non-count nouns. Examples:

lĩ- fí'	"pus"
lĩ- bàn	"poverty"
lĩ- bàn	"fog"
lĩ- sín	"moon"
lĩ- fón	"fat"
lĩ- bĩ	"breast milk"
lĩ- kǎō	"yawn"
lĩ- šemó'	"sneeze"

Gender 6 mà-

As mentioned in the introduction of single class genders, there are plural nouns in this class without singular forms.

Examples:

mà- kàngá	"chest"
mà- fíndù	"soot"
mà- kún	"beans"
mà- tùm	"lies"
mà- sàkǎn	"thanks."

Gender 6a mà-

This is a class of liquid masses and as such neuter

Examples

mà- dí'	"water"
mà- kíí	"blood"
mà- nýà	"urine"
mà- dé	"river"
mà- šén	"stagnant rain water"

Gender 7 é-

This is another class of neutral nouns is Léfó'

Examples:

é- túman	"fufu"
é- sàká	"melon"
é- lén	"date palm leaves"
é- dúbé	"honour"
é- dílím	"shadow"
é- dí'	"sweat"
é- kùl	"storm"
é- fínja	"darkness"
é- yǒ'	"rainy season"

Gender 11 du-

Gender eleven contains a few abstract nouns namely:

dũ- lù	"sun"
dỹ- ù	"God"
dw- ê	"laughter"

Gender 14 wu-

Single gender 14 refers to uncountable and abstract nouns

Examples

wù- yũi	"honey"
wù- kwā	"salt"
wũ- ndi	"rice"
wũ- yō	"sleep"
wù- dī'	"weight"
wù- sòn	"shame"
wù- yà'	"length"

Gender 19 fy-

The Only four nouns found for ths class belong to the single gender. They are:

fy- āngũ'	"sand"
fy- ěn	"mush room"
fy- ǒ'	"wild pepper"
fii	"camwood"

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 THE CONCORDIAL MORPHEMES

In Chapters III and IV the nouns, their prefixes and gender system have been discussed. This chapter will describe the concord system of Léfó'. The following features will be considered.

5.1 Numerals: 1, 2, 3,4, 5, "how many"

5.2 Possessive pronouns:

1st, 2nd, 3rd persons singular and

1st, 2nd, 3rd persons plural

5.3 Demonstrative pronouns:

"that/those mentioned", "this one", and "that one".

5.4 Qualifiers: "good", "big", "small", "which one?" and "another"

5.5 Subject concord with "who/which"

5.6 Associative concord

5.7 Summary chart of the concords

T 5.1 Numerals

CL	Example	"one"	"two"	"three"	"four"	"five"	"howmany"
	Gloss	-f/pó	-bê	-lâán	-níin	-tân	-tèin
51	n-jíb "thief"	ñ-fó					
2	bà-sūn "friends"		bà-bê	bà-lâán	bà-níin	bà-tân	bà-tèin
3	m̃-màn "kernel"	ñ-fó					
4	mī-kò "ropes"		mī-bê	mī-lâán	mī-níin	mī-tân	mī-tèin
5	lī-kà "egg"	lī-fó					
6	mà-bò "pumpkins"		mà-bê	mà-lân	mà-níin	mà-tân	mà-tèin
7	é-fī "bone"	é-fó					
8	bī-kàkàn "insects"		bī-bê	bī-lân	bī-níin	bī-tân	bē-tèin
9	m-búl "goat"	pó					
10	kwi "bush rats"		é-bê	é-lân	é-níin	é-tân	é-tèin
11	dùl "latrine"	dī-fó					
14	bw-in "day"	u-fór					
19	fy-ō a "wild pepper"	-pó					

As indicated in table 5.1 the various numeral stems are -f/pó "1", -bè "2", -làán "3", -níìn "4", -tân "5", -tèín "how many"

It can further be observed from the table that the numeral prefix for "1" concords with the singular noun classes as follows:

CL	Concord
1	ñ-
3	ñ-
5	l-
7	é-
9	ø-
11	dì-
14	u-
19	ø-

Here are a few examples of different singular class nouns and their numeral concords.

ñ- lā'	ñ- fō	"one branch"
lī- sùn	lī- fō	"one tooth"
é-kàkàn	é-fō	"one insect"
ngwī	-pō	"one pig"
dù-ú	dī-fō	"one God"
wù-nòn	u-fō	"one bird"

The plural classes of nouns have the following concord prefixes.

CL	Concord
2	bā-
4	mī-

6	mǎ-
8	bǐ-
10	é-

Here are examples of these nouns and their numeral concords

b- álán	bǎ- làán	"three daughters"
mii- lá'	mi- tán	"five branches"
mà-sùŋ	mǎ- bē	"two teeth"
bi-kàkàn	bi-níin	"four insects"
ngwi	é-tèin	"howmany pigs?"

Numerals from "6" to "10" and beyond take no concordial morphemes :as in these examples

kú'	ntýú	"six fowls"
mà-	yǒ'	"eight thorns"
mí-màn	šyáámbē	"seven kernels"
bi-lén	dýùm	"ten palmtrees"
mà-lē	libú	"nine stones"

T 5.2 The Possessive Pronouns

CL	Example	S i n g u l a r			P l u r a l		
		my	your	his/her	our	your	their
1	mw-ǎn "child"	-mýà	-wó	mó	-sé	nyè	-bò
2	b- ǎn "children"	bá-mýà	bá-wó	bá-mó	bá-sé	bá-nyè	ba-bò
3	ñ-lâ' "branch"	ń-mýà	ń-wó	ń-mó	ń-sé	ń-nyè	ń-bò
4	mì-lâ' "branches"	mí-mýà	mə-wó	mə-mó	mə-sé	mə-nyè	mə-bò
5	li-pâ' "wing"	lí-mýà	li-wó	li-mó	li-sé	li-nyè	li-bò
6	mà-pâ? "wings"	má-mýà	ma-wó	ma-mó	ma-sé	ma-nyè	má-bò
7	é-yòn "age group"	é-mýà	é-wó	é-mó	é-sé	é-nyè	é-bò
8	bí-yòn "age groups"	bí(ə)nyè	bi-wó	bi-mó	bi-sé	bi-nyè	bi-bò
9	kwi "bush rat"	é-mýà	é-wó	é-mó	é-sé	é-nyè	é-bò
10	kwi "bush rats"	é-mýà	é-wó	é-mó	é-sé	é-nyè	é-bò
11	dùi "latrine"	dí-mýè	di-wó	dí-mó	dí-sé	dí-nyè	di-bò
14	wù-yúi "honey"	u-mýà	u-wó	u-mó	u-sé	u-nyè	u-bò
19	fy-àngú "sand"	u-mýà	u-wó	u-mó	u-sé	u-nyè	u-bò

Table 5.2 shows the different concords of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons singular and plural of the possessive pronouns. The stems of the pronouns are:

"my"	"your"	"his/her"	Sg.
-mýê	-wó	-mó	
"our"	"your"	"their"	Pl.
-sé	-nyê	-bò	

The concords for the various classes are as follows:

T 5.2.1

CL	Concord	CL	Concord
1	ø-	8	bí-
2	bá-	9	ê-
3	ñ-	10	é-
4	mí-	11	dí-
5	lí-	14	ú-
6	má-	19	û-
7	ê-		

From Chart 5.2.1 it can be noted that the tones on all the concords are high but for class 1 which has zero concord and class 9 which carries a low tone.

Possessive pronouns in Lèfó' always occur after the noun unlike the case in English. Here are some examples for comparison:

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-------|-----------------|
| 1) | é-bùŋ | é-mýà | "my box" |
| | box | my | |
| 2) | lì-bàn | lì-bō | "their poverty" |
| | poverty | their | |
| 3) | ndâ' | é-sé | "our house" |
| | house | our | |

In English possessive pronouns which occur after the noun as in the constructions below are unattested in Lèfó'.

- 4) the box is mine
- 5) the money is theirs
- 6) the car is ours

T 5.3 Demonstrative Pronouns

CL Example	that/those mentioned	this one	that one
1 n- jib "thief"	áw- úê	ani- n	ani- ni
2 bà- sùn "friends"	áb- úê	bá- n	ba- ni
3 m- bá' "parcel"	ém- é	mu- n	mu- ni
4 mí- kô' "ropes"	ém- é	mi- n	mi- ni
5 lì- kâ "egg"	éd- é	di- n	di- ni
6 mà- bò "pumpkins"	ém- é	ma- n	ma- ni
7 é- fi "bone"	éy- é	yi- n	yi- ni
8 bí-kàkàn "insects"	bib- é	bi- n	bi- ni
9 m- búl "goat"	éy- é	èni- n	èni- ni
10 kwi "bush rats"	éy- é	yé- n	yé- ni
11 dúi "latrine"	əd- é	di- n	di- ni
14 wù-kù "mountain"	əb-úê	bū- n	bu- ní
19 fy-ō' "mushroom"	əb-úê	bū- n	bu- ní

As seen on table 5.3, the concords of the demonstrative pronouns vary alot from one class to another and from one pronoun to another.

5.3.1 The demonstrative concords:

CL	concord	CL	concord
1	āw-, ani-	8	bib-, bi-
2	āb-, bā-	9	ēy-, eni-
3	ēmm-, mu-	10	ēy-, yē-
4	ēmmi-, mi-	11	əd-, di-
5	ēdy, di-	14	əd-, bū
6	ēmm-, ma-	19	əb-, bū-
7	ēy-, yi-		

The above chart 5.3.1 shows the difference between the pronoun "that/those mentioned" and "this/that". The demonstrative pronouns follow the nouns they qualify in the same way as the possessive pronouns

A few examples:

bā- sūn	āb- ūā	"the friends afore mentioned"
lī- kē	di- n	"this egg"
kwi	yē-ni	"those bush rats"

T5.4 The Qualifiers

CL	good	all of	the big one	the small one	which	another
1	ê-mbáá	ân-syèn	â-nnén	ân-tékén	ân-fé	am-péé'
2	bá-mbáá	bá-syèn	bá-nnén	bá-tékén	bá-fé	bà'-péé'
3	mú-mbáá	mú-syèn	mú-nnén	mú-tékén	mú-fé	mù-péé'
4	mí-mbáá	mí-syèn	mí-nnén	mí-tékén	mí-fé	mì-péé'
5	lí-mbáá	lí-syèn	lí-nnén	lí-tékén	lí-fé	lì-péé'
6	má-mbáá	má-syèn	ma-nnén	má-tékén	má-fé	mà-péé'
7	sí-mbáá	sí-syèn	sí-nnén	sí-tékén	sí-fé	sí-péé'
8	bé-mbáá	bé-syèn	bé-nnén	bé-tékén	bé-fé	bē-péé'
9	ê-mbáá	ê-syèn	ê-nnén	ê-tékén	ê-fé	è-péé'
10	é-mbáá	é-syèn	é-nnén	é-tékén	é-fé	é-péé'
11	dí-mbáá	dí-syèn	dí-nnén	dí-tékén	dí-fé	dí-péé'
14	wú-mbáá	wú-syèn	wú-nnén	wú-tékén	wú-fé	wu-péé'
19	ú-mbáá	ú-syèn	ú-nnén	ú-tékén	ú-fé	ú-péé'

The stems of the qualifiers included on table 5.4:

- mbáá "good" (1)
- sýân "all of it" (2)
- nnân "the big one" (3)
- tákân "the small one" (4)
- fá "which one?" (5)
- péé' "another" (6)

All the above stems and their concords occur after the nouns.

The qualifier concords

CL.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	ε	an-	a-	an-	an-	am-
2	ba	-	-	-	-	-
3	mu	-	-	-	-	-
4	mi-	-	-	-	-	-
5	li-	-	-	-	-	-
6	mà-	-	-	-	-	-
7	si-	-	sie-	-	-	-
8	be-	-	-	-	-	-
9	è-	-	-	-	-	-
10	é-	-	-	-	-	-
11	di-	-	-	-	-	-
14	wu-	-	-	-	-	-
19	u-	-	-	-	-	-

Except for classes 1 and 7 whose concords vary a little, all the other classes have the same concord running through all the qualifiers. The concords prefixes for the qualifier "another" take low tones except class 10. The concords prefixes for all the other qualifiers carry a high tone except class 9.

Chart 5.5 Subject concords

CL	R.Pron	Vb
1	ā-	à
2	ā-	bā
3	em-	ñ
4	em-	mí
5	ê-	dí
6	ém-	má
7	é-	ê
8	é-	bí
9	ê-	dí
10	é-	dí
11	ā-	dí
14	ā-	bú
19	ā-	ú-

Subject Concord Examples

CL				
1	n-júm	ā-wè	à ló' ā	nyú
	S	R Pron.	V Neg	N
	"husband	who	is	ill"
2	b-à'	ā-bwè	bā	lèlíyá'
	subj.	R Pron	V	Adv.
	"people	who	are	ill"
3.	η-ki	em-mè	ñ	kòòlì
	S	R Pron	V	Adj.
	"village	which	is	big"
4.	mi-bā'	em-mi	mí-	lòlì
	S	R Pron	V	Adj.
	"parcels	which	are	nice"

5. li- fín êdê dí- yàbàni
S R Pron V Prep.
"the forest which is far"
6. mà- kàí ém-mê mà- pyétí
S R Pron V Adj.
"cocoyams which are soft"
7. ê- làngà é- yê é- kpòti
S R Pron V Adj.
"palmwine which is sour"
8. bi-kwi é-býâ bí- kênji
S R Pron V Adj.
"the yams which are dry"
9. kúkwèlí é-yâ dí mà-kénjo
S R Pron V Adj
"a tortoise which is cunning"
- 10 njò' é- yé šoki
S R Pron Adj
"elephants which are huge"
11. dù-í á-dê dí sàni
S R Pron V Adj
"a latrine which is clean"
- 14 bw-álù á-bwê bú kólí
S R Pron V Adj
"a canoe which is big"
- 19 fy-ō' á-bwê ú-fyà
S R Pron V Adj
"wild pepper which is hot"

5.6 ASSOCIATIVE CONCORDS

Associative markers occur between two sets of nouns to indicate the relationship of possession which exists between the nouns. The class prefix of the first noun always determines its associative markers. Examples of these concords are presented below following the various noun classes

1. mw-ǎn mǔ ñ-fôn(cl1) "the child of the chief"
child AM chief
2. bà-kên bá ñ-fôn "guests of the chief"
guests AM chief
3. ñ-lú mǔ ndá'(cl9) "roof of a house"
head AM house
4. mī-kàngáá mǐ bw-ǎ(cl.14) "roots of a tree"
roots AM tree
5. lī-bí lí nyà'(cl.9) "the breast of a cow"
breast AM cow
6. mà-bí má mbúl(cl.9) "the droppings of a goat"
droppings AM goat
7. è-nìngán é mā-fê(cl.6) "affinity of the twins"
love AM twins
8. bī-lô' bí bá-fôn(cl2) "spears of title holders"
spears AM title holders
9. ngínyà è dī-lé(cl.5) "hardness of stone"
strength AM stone

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 10. | mbwā
dogs | ê
AM | nsôngō sôngō(cl.9)
hunter | "dogs of a hunter" |
| 11. | dw-ê
laughter | dí
AM | mù-nyênê(cl.3)
joy | "laughter of joy" |
| 14. | wù-lám
trap | ũ
AM | sūá(cl.9)
first | "the first trap" |
| 19. | fy-ăn
mushroom | ê
AM | yànê(cl.9)
yesterday | "mushroom of yesterday" |

In the associative concords classes 7, 10 and 19 have a common associative marker [ê] with a high tone. Class 9 has the same marker with a low tone [ễ]. All the markers of the rest of the classes bear a high tone. There seem to be a tone assimilation between the first noun and its class marker as found in classes 3, 4, 7, 10 and 14. In the above data only the second noun is given a class indication. The first noun and concord marker follow the serial class numbers.

T 5.6 Concord Summary Chart

CL.	Nu- merals	Posses- sive	Demon- strative	Quali- fiers	Relative pronoun	Verb	Associa- tive
1	m-	ø-	áw-, ani-	é-, á-, án-	á-	à	mú
2	bà-	bá-	áb-, bá-	bā-	á-	bá	bā
3	n-	ñ-	émm-, mu-	mū-	em-	ñ-	mú
4	mì-	mí-	émmi-, mi-	mí-	em-	mí-	mí
5	lì-	lí-	édy-, di-	lí-	è-	dí-	lí
6	mà-	má-	émm-, ma-	mā-	ém-	mā-	mā
7	é-	é-	éy-, yi-	sí-, síe-	ε-	é-	é
8	bi-	bí-	bib-, bi-	bē	ē-	bí-	bí
9	ø-	è-	èy-, eni-	è-	è-	dí-	é
10	é-	é-	éy-, yē-	é-	é-	dí-	é
11	di-	dí-	əd-, di-	dí-	á-	dí-	dí
14	u-	û-	əb-, bú-	wū-	á-	bú-	ú
19	ø-	û-	əb-, bú	û-	á-	û-	é

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Lèfó' has 15 noun classes as compared to the 23 enumerated for proto-Bantu by Welmers (1973:165). Lèfó' Noun classes include: 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 19. Fifteen out of twenty three classes of proto-Bantu is quite an appreciable number for Lèfó' noun classes in view of the fact that no one Bantu language has all the 23 proto-Bantu noun classes. According to Guthrie (1967) the range is between ten and twenty. It has also been noticed that suffixes are not a feature of Lèfó' noun class system.

Though the prefixes of classes 1a and 9/10, classes 1 and 3, and classes 6 and 6a look formally identical, an explanation for the semantic distinctiveness has been given.

It was also noticed that some Lèfó' classes like 9/10, 7/8, 5/6 and 3/4 have many nouns whereas classes 11 and 19 have too few. These last two classes are probably being threatened by extinction.

The Lèfó' concord morphemes have been presented in chapter five and a summary of the concords is contained in chart(T5.6)

The study also reveals that there is flux and innovation in Lèfó' noun classes. For instance nouns which are supposed to be

in class 6a, all of a sudden find themselves in different classes.

Example

li- fê (cl.5)	"palm oil"
é- bôm (cl.7)	"catarrh"
é- di' (cl.7)	"sweat"

These and earlier mentioned examples mark dynamism and innovation in Lèfô' class system but at the same time weaken the semantic criteria in noun class assignment. This is why the formal criteria: the system of affixes is more reliable.

Lèfô' research prospects

It is generally agreed that the lexicon of a language, its phrase structure such as; noun phrase, verb phrase, adjectival phrase, prepositional phrase etc, which build up the clause or sentence, are basic to the understanding of the functioning or grammar of any given language. Radford (1988) refers to these structures as syntax. Since this work only deals with the description of Lèfô' noun class system, a lot still has to be done. Besides the study of other phrasal constituents in Lèfô', the alphabet still has to be provided. This would make possible the reading and writing of Lèfô' literature and the translation of vital documents into Lèfô'.

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