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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.

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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.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS.

A	Adjective
DEM	Demonstrative Pronoun
Poss	Possessive Pronoun
Num	Numerals
V	Vowels
Adv.P.	Adverbial Phrase.
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) (β)	Plus or minus
#	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
ˇ 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 wil 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 main 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 foodstuff especially maize and groudnuts 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" theretore means "people of Mmen". If this information is true, then it could be concluded that the Bali vocabulary played a vital role in modifiying 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 rear 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 chap 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:

Ex.1	Mmem	Kom	Gloss
1	ə́fə́kâ?	+f+kâ	'tree'
2	ə́fɔ̀in	+fɔ̀in	'kàng'
3	ǹdʒà$\eng$	ǹdʒà$\eng$	'song'
4	ə́fə́tám	+f+tám	"fruit'
5	ə́fə́támú?	+f+támú?	'cat'
6	$\eng$̀gwà?li	$\eng$gwà?l+	'book'
7	$\eng$̀gɔ̀in	$\eng$̀gɔ̀in	'girl'
8	$\eng$́gé	$\eng$́gé	'trouble'
9	mmùl	mùl	'sivelling'
10	mmo	mú	'water'
11	ńdɔ́$\eng$	ńdɔ́$\eng$	'horn'
12	ǹdɔ̀$\eng$	ǹdɔ̀$\eng$	'potato'
13	pɔ́m	bɔ́m	'build'
14	sám	sám	'transfer'
15	túm	túm	'send'

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 elicitating 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-

cord, form of the prefix and gender :

> *" 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."*

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 :

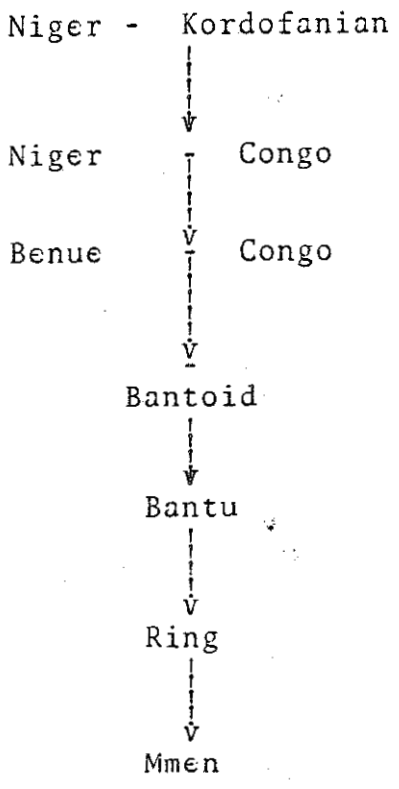


Fig.1

Meanwhile, Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun, classifies the Ring languages under Grassfield Bantu; a sub-group of Bantu as follows:

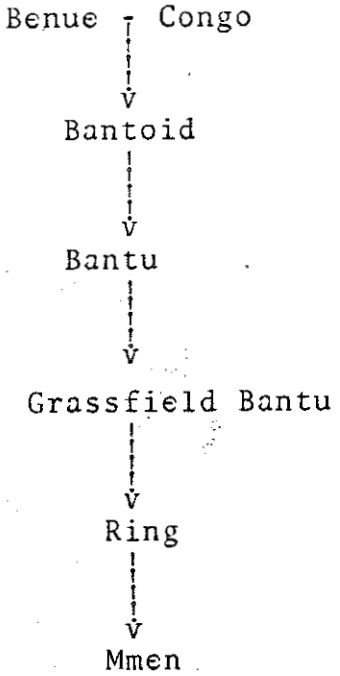
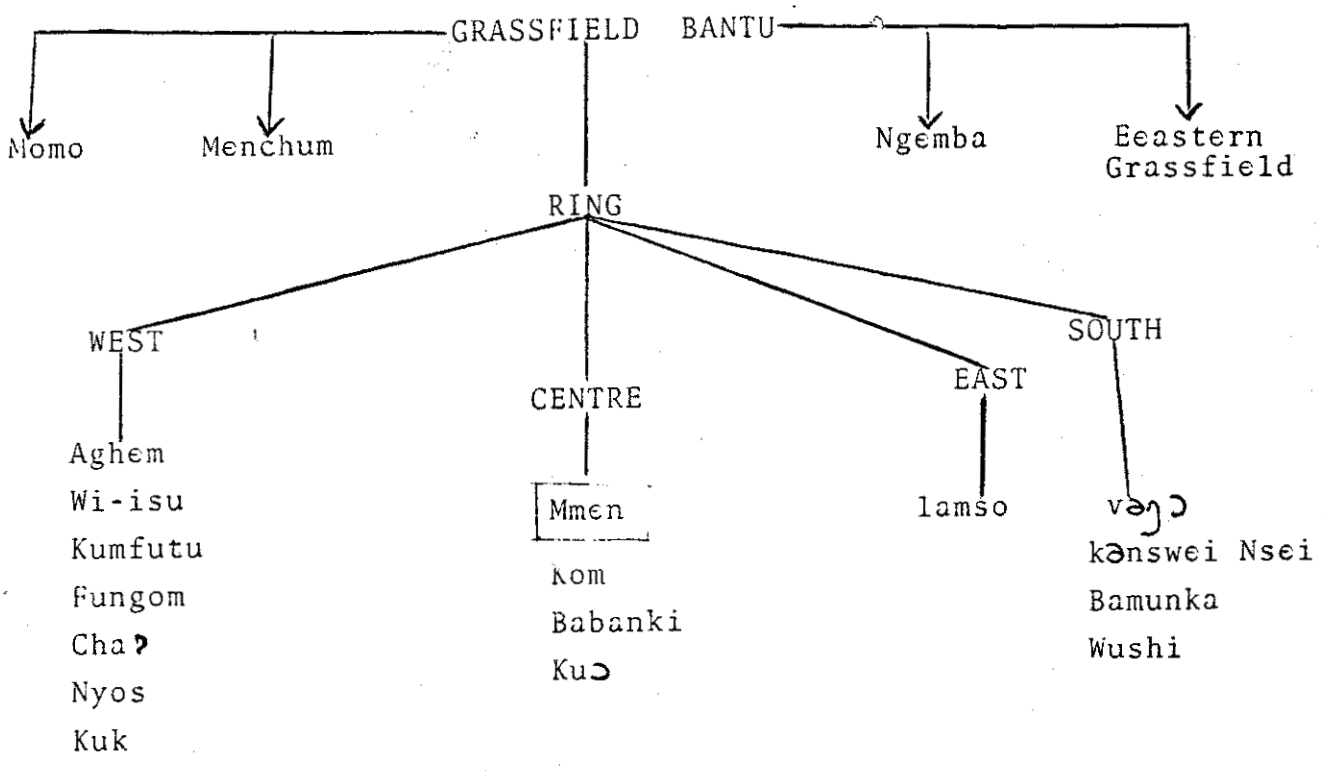


Fig 2.

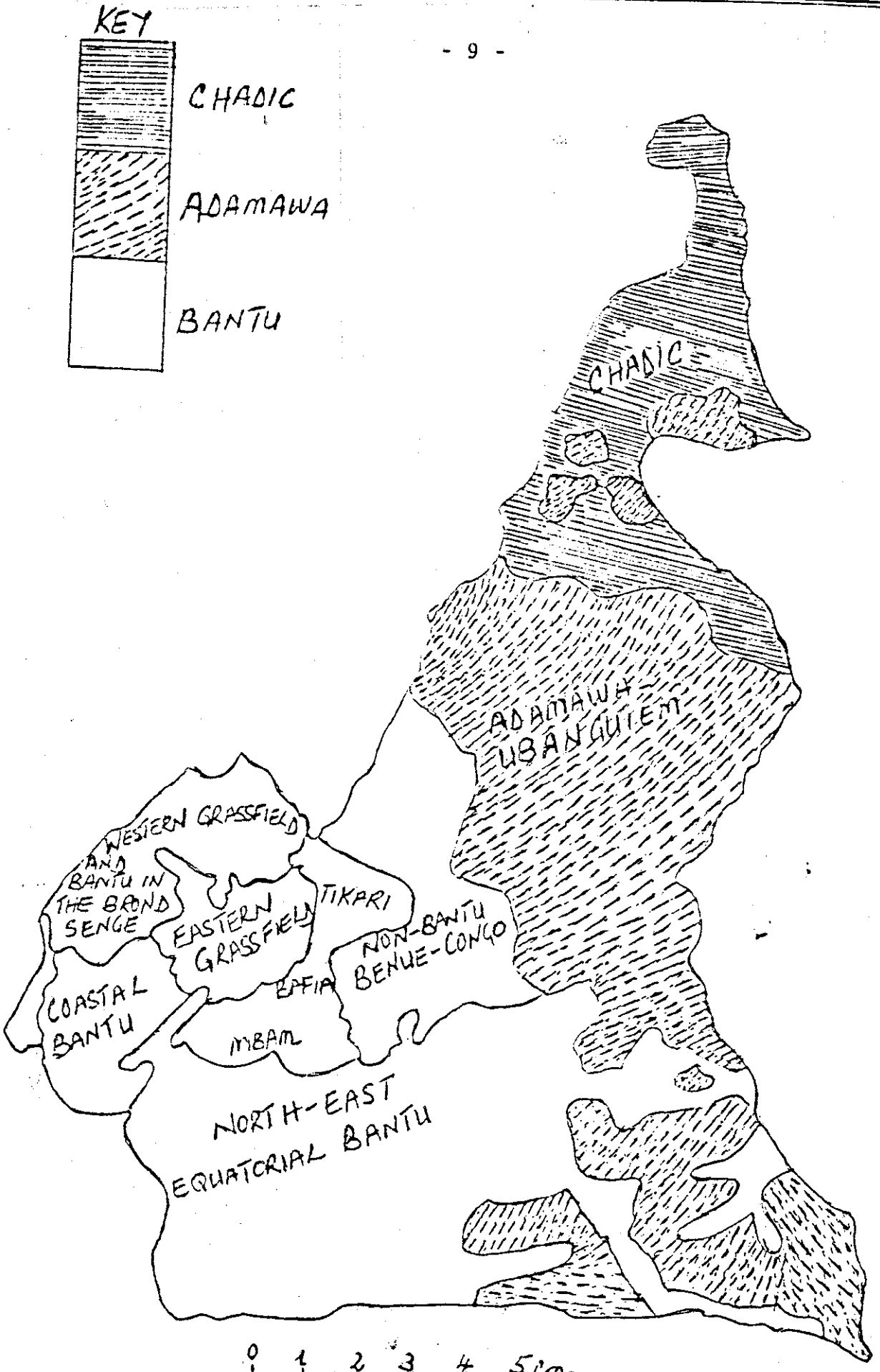
The classification of Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun is preferable because it gives more detailed information about the Ring group as the diagram below illustrates :



SOURCE: ALCAM 1983

Fig.3

MAJOR LANGUAGE ZONES OF CAMEROON

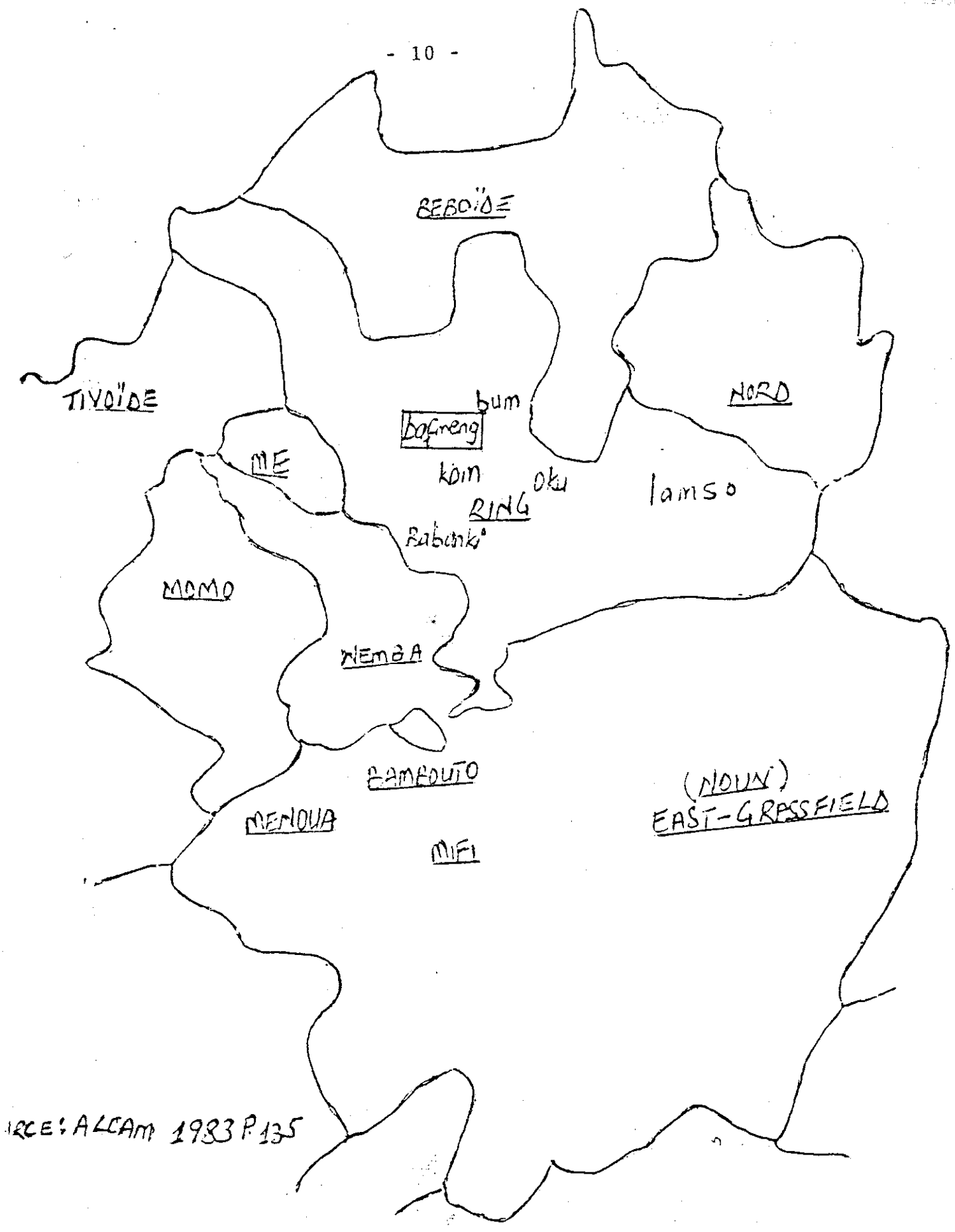


Map 1

RCE: ALCAM 1983
P. 370

1/5000 000

BANTOU DU GRASSFIELD



SOURCE: ALCAM 1983 P 135

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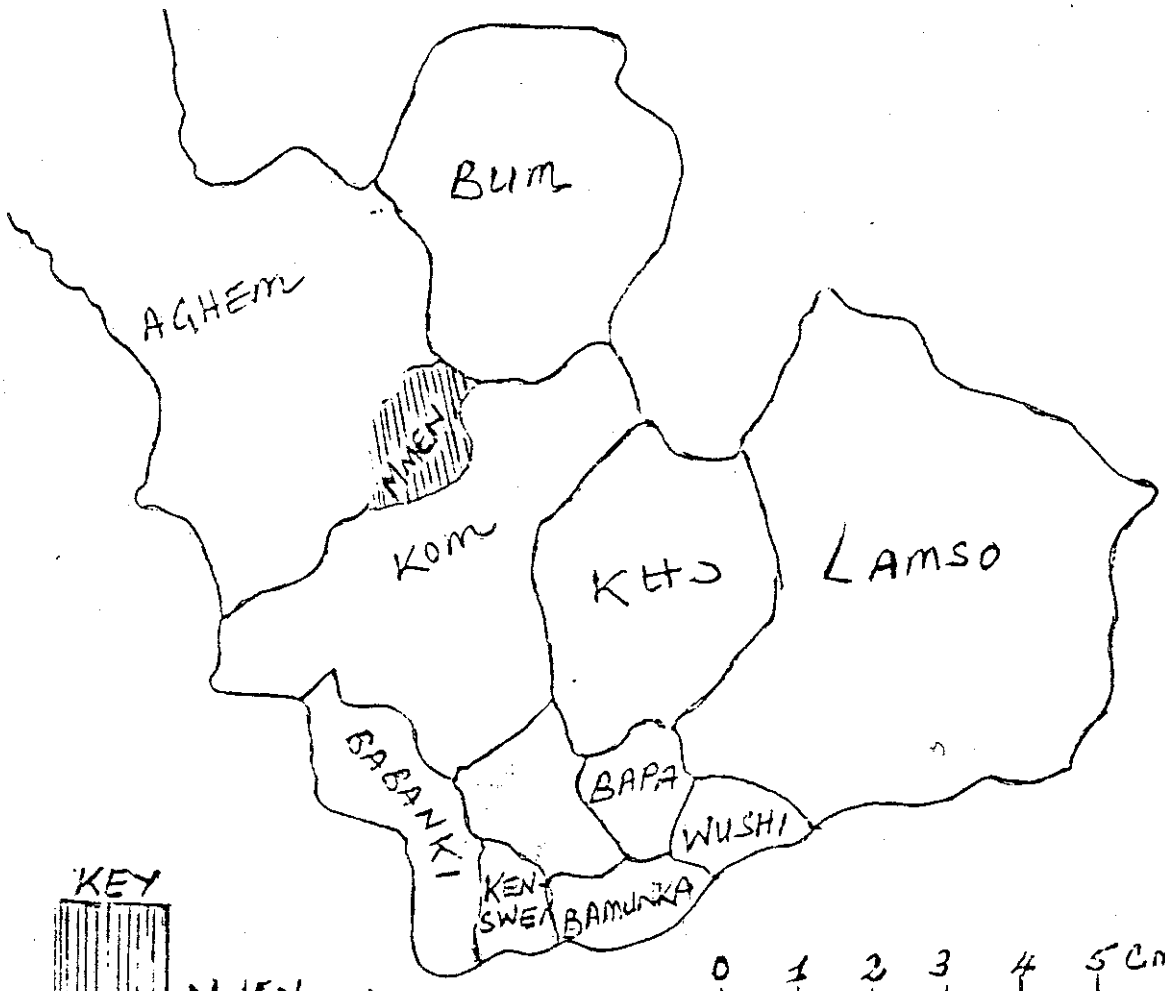
Map 2

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 syllabe 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, vewels, 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 :

Ex: 1

	Phoneme (IPA)	Grapheme	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	p	p	ɔ́pú	'dog'
2	b	b	ɔ́fɔ́blɛ̀	'pain'
3	bv	bv	bvɔ́f	'ask'
4	pf	pf	ápfə̀	'fainting fit'
5	f	f	ífú	'medicines'
6	v	v	ɔ́vaín	'child'
7	m	m	mɔ̀ʔ	'one'

8	n	n	ńdɔ́ŋ	'horn'
9	t	t	ə́tɔ́f	'intelligence'
10	d	d	ndùm	'vagina'
11	s	s	ísáŋnê	'happiness'
12	z	z	ə́záŋsé	'sugar-cane'
13	l	l	ísyûl-lə̂	'insult'
14	ts	ts	ə́tsùm	'drum'
15	dz	dz	índzɨ́s	'knee'
16	S	Sh(Š)	á Sû	'soap'
17	ʒ	ʒh(Ž)	ə́fə́ʒə̀	'god'
18	tS	ch(Č)	ítSû	'mouth'
19	dʒ	j	ǹdʒàŋ	'song'
20	ɲ	Ny (ñ)	ɲàm	'animal'
21	ŋ	ŋ	ŋgàm	'week'
22	K	K	ákás	'zinc'
23	g	g	áŋgàntə̀	'chest'
24	ɣ	gh	ə́fə́ɣàm	'mat'
25	y	y	ə́fíyèlə́	'earring'
26	w	w	íwêŋ	'grass'
27	?	?	tə́?	'quarter'

The voiceless velar fricative /ˉX_/ found in Agha's list of consonants was not attested in the data collected for this work. Agha has it in one word only /ə̄xʸə́_/ meaning people. In this work, the voiced velar fricative /ˉɣ_/ was found in the place of /ˉX_/ in /ə̄ɣə́_/ meaning 'people'. The occurence of /ɣ/ instead of / X / in /ə̄ɣə́_/ is justifiable because it is a common phenomenon for sounds to be strengthened intervocalically. In addition, /ˉɣ_/ is widely attested in Mmen as the examples below illustrate :

Ex: 2.

1	ə́ɣə́	'people
2	ə́fə́ɣàm	'mat'
3	ə́ɣɔ́in	'children'

4 əfáɣáŋ 'vein'
5 íɣəʔ 'jealousy'
6 áɣâ 'facces'
7 əfəɣáŋkɔ́ʔ 'chameleon'

Below is a chart containing Mmen consonants.

Place of Art / Manner of Art	Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Alveolar	Pre-Palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Labio-velar
VL Oral Stop	p		t			k	ʔ	
VD	b		d			g		
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ		
VL Fricative		f	s	ʃ				
VD		v	z	ʒ		ɣ		
VL Affricate		pf	ts	tʃ				
VD		bv	dz	dʒ				
Lateral			l					
Glide					y			w

Fig.4.

2.1.2. CONSONANT MODIFICATION.

Few cases of consonant modification exist in Mmen. Thèse 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:

Ex: 3.	Phoneme	Grapheme	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	k^y	k^y	k^yèŋtʃû	'chin'
2	s^y	s^y	ís^{y}uĺ-lə̂	'insult'
3	t^y	ch^y	tʃ^{y}úɣə́	'sign'

This process can be represented by the following rule.

PR 1 : $C \longrightarrow C^y$ /– /̄+ high/

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

Ex.4.	Phoneme	Grapheme	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	tw	tw	ítwàs	'spoons'
2	kw	kw	íkwám	'crabs'
3	gw	gw	ŋ̀gwàʔ	'seed'
4	lw	lw	ílwòʃ.î	'palm fronds'

The labialization process can be captured by the following rule.

PR 2 $C \longrightarrow C^w$ / -/̄-high/

iii) Aspiration: This is a process by which the consonant feature of fricative constriction at the glottis /∓ asp/is superimposed on a consonant at morpheme boundary as indicated by the examples below :

Ex. 5.	Phoneme	Grapheme	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	p^h	p^h	áp^{h}ə́ŋ	'compound'
2	p^h	p^h	ə́p^{h}â	'futher'
3	k^h	k^h	ə́k^{h}îŋ	'boundarystem'
4	k^h	k^h	ə́k^{h}ə̀k^{h}ə̀	'fly'

This process is captured by the following rule :

PR 3 $\begin{bmatrix} c \\ \text{-voice} \\ \text{-cont} \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow$ /∓ asp/ + -

iv) Homorganic nasal assimilation: In this process, a nasal consonant /Ñ/ 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.

1	/N+mùl/	->	[¯m̀mùl]	'swelling'
2	/N+bélé/	->	[¯ḿbélé]	'caterpillar'
3	/N+dɔ́ŋ/	->	[¯ńdɔ́ŋ]	'horn'
4	/N+dɔ̀ŋ/	->	[¯ǹdɔ̀ŋ]	'potato'
5	/N+dʒàŋ/	->	[¯ǹdʒàŋ]	'song'
6	/N+dʒàŋ	->	[¯ndzàŋ]	'intestine'
7	/N+dʒɔ́ŋ/	->	[¯ńdʒɔ́ŋ]	'moon'
8	/N+gàm/	->	[¯ŋ̀gàm]	'week'
9	/N+gwàʔ/	->	[ŋ̀gwàʔ]	'seed'
10	/N+gɔ̀in/	->	[ŋgɔ̀in]	'girl'

This assimilation process can be captured by the rule.

PR4 $[+\text{nas}] \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix}\alpha\ \text{ant}\\ \beta\ \text{cor}\end{bmatrix} \;/\; - \begin{bmatrix}\text{ant}\\ \text{cor}\end{bmatrix}$

2.1.3. VOWELS.

Mmen has 3 front, 3 central and 3 back vowels. The front vowels are high, mid-high and mid-low; the central are high, mid-high and low while the back ones are high, mid-high and mid-low. The 9 vowels are exemplified in the data below.

Ex. 7.	Vowel	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	i	m - yîŋ	'breast-milk'
2	e	ə́fə́né	'boil'(noun)
3	ɛ	ífɛ̂	'cutlass'
4	ɑ	ákwàlà	'prostitute'

5	ə	ə́fə́lí	'star'
6	U	ákúm	'juju'
7	+	ńdz+s	'knee'
8	o	ílwô	'bridge'
9	ɔ	ńdɔ́ŋ	'horn'

In Agha's (1987) list of vowel the central high vowels /+/ is conspicuosly absent. From the data collected for this work, the impression got is that she must have replaced /+/ with the central mid-high vowel /ə/. But as the examples below illustrate, the two vowels are distinct phonemes.

Ex. 8.

	Example	Gloss
1	ákə́m	'crab'
2	ák+m	'windingsheet'
3	ípɔ́	'pit'
4	áp+	'camwood'
5	ḿl+	'wine'
6	ilə̂	'foam'

From the above exemplification, one realises that the occurence of /+/ and /ə/ is contrastive, thus resulting in a change in meaning. The conclusion therefore is that they are two different sounds.

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

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	i	+	u
MID-HIGH	e	ə	o
MID-LOW	ɛ		ɔ
LOW		a	

Fig.5.

2.1.4. TONES.

Tone is an important aspect of language study, espacially 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

Ex.9.	Example	Gloss
1	ǹdùm	'vagina'
2	ńdúm	'road'
3	ńdɔ̀ŋ	'horn'
4	ǹdɔ̀ŋ	'potato'
5	ńdʒɔ̀ŋ	'moon'
6	ndʒɔ̀ŋ	'beer'

Mmen manifests five tones, three level and two contour. The level tones are high /˗/, mid /¯/, and low /ˍ/ while the contour tones comprise rising /˗ˍ/ and falling /ˍ˗/. The five tones are exemplified below :

Ex. 10.

	Tone	Feature	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	/˗/	High (H)	ɔ́pú	'dog'
2	/¯/	Mid (M)	ńdɛ̄	'house'
3	/˗\˗/	Low (L)	ŋ̀gàm	'week'
4	/˗ˇ˗/	Rising(R)	ǹdʒǎ	'intestine'
5	/˗^˗/	Falling (F)	ɔ́fɔ́kâ	'tree'

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

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 syllable 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 séquence 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.

	Word	Root	Affix	Root Structure	Affix structure.	Gloss
1	mfú	fú	m-	cv	c	'medecines'
2	əpú	pú	ə-	cv	v	'clog'
3	ífú	fú	í-	cv	v	'medecine'
4	əsəndɛ̄	dɛ̄	əsə -	cv	vcv	'houses'
5	əfətám	tám	əfə-	cvc	vcv	'fruit'
6	ńdɔŋ	dɔŋ	ń-	cvc	c	'horn'
7	ŋ̀gàm	gàm	ŋ̀-	cvc	c	'week'
8	ákúm	kúm	á-	cvc	v	'juju'
9	əsəndɔŋ	dɔŋ	əsə -	cvc	vcv	'horns'

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 (eg numbers 4 end 9) is attached to the singular morphème 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.

Ex. 12.

	Open	Gloss		Closed	Gloss
1	mfú	'medicines'	q	ńdɔŋ	'horn'
2	ɗpú	'dog'	10	ǹdɔ̀ŋ	'potato'
3	ífú	'medicine'	11	ŋgàm	'week'
4	ɗpʰâ	'father'	12	ákúm	'juju'
5	ǹdʒǎ	'intestine'	13	ɗkʰîŋ	'boundary stem'
6	átú	'head'	14	ɗkám	'thousand'
7	ákwàlà	'prostitute"	15	ífɔ́m	'brain'
8	ɗwuɔ̀	'person'	16	ílîŋ	bamboo'

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 /ˉX_/ and its voiced counterpart /ˉɣ_/. It was concluded that /ˉX_/is not attested in Mmen, that it is instead /ˉɣ_/that is attested. The researcher was pushed on to draw this conclusion by the realisation that /ˉɣ_/ is widely attested in Mmen, while /ˉX_/ found by Agha,(1987 p. 38,58), is attested in one word only. Furthermore, even in this lone word /ə̄xyə̄/, it is seen that /ˉX_/to be voiced since it is a common phenomenon for sounds to be strengthened intervocally. The failure of /ˉX_/ to be strengthened makes the existence of /ˉX_/in this position highly questionable. However, this researcher concluded that /ˉX_/ does not exist in Mmen.

Discussions in this chapter also centered on consonant modification and four oustanding 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 /ˉ+_/ 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 /ɨ̄_/ for the central mid-high vowels /ə̄_/ because in words in which /ə̄_/ is attested Agha used but /ˉ+_/. However, a tentative conclusion was arrived at; that /ˉ+_/ and /ə̄_/are contrastive and are thus two separate phonemes. This conclusion was drawn after an examination of the occurences of /ˉ+_/ and /ə̄_/ 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 identifiying 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 occuring without a prefix of any Kind occurs in verbals used as interjections.

4) A balanced vowel system in the radicals, cousisting 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 repartissent 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 marquës 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 cocerns 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

viii people
viiii infinitives
ix borrowed words.

3.1. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING NOUN CLASSES.

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

i. The form of the prefix
ii Gender
iii Nouns and their concordial elements
iv 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, 6a, 7, 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 then 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 / ə́- /, /ə́w-/ and /ə́v-/ eg.

Ex. 13.

1 ə́- pʰa 'father'
2 ə́w-uɔ 'person'

3 ə́v-ʊ̀pɔ́mə́ 'builder'
4 ə́v-aín 'child'
5 ɔ́v-ákú 'orphan'

The basic prefix here seems to be /ə́-/which is realised as /ə́-/ before consonants.
/ə́w-/ before rounded vowels and
/ə́v-/ before unrounded vowels.

The postulation of /ə́-/ as the basic prefix is motivated by the fact that the class 2 prefix /ə́ɣə́-/ which is the plural of class 1 maintains this initial /ə́-/. Moreover, the context of occurence of /ə́w-/ and /ə́v-/ is very predictable, /ə́w-/ before /[+ round]/ vowels and /ə́v-/ before /[- round]/ vowels). This gives the impression that /ə́-/ is the basic prefix with /[W]/ and /[V]/ only coming in to separate a cluster of vowels. This consonant insertion process can be explained by the rules:

PR.5. ∅ -> /[W]/-/[+ syll] / [+ round]/

PR.6 ∅ -> /[V]/-/[+ syll] / [- round]/

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

UR ##ə́ phâ ##ɔ́ ʊ̀## ɔ́ ákú

PR5 — ɔ́wʊ̀ ——
PR6 — —— ɔ́vákú
SR /ə́phâ/ /ə́wʊ̀/ /ə́vákú/

The class 1 prefix corresponds to the proto-ring / Ù-/.

3.2.2. Class 2.

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

Ex.13.

1	əɣɔ-phâ	'fathers'
2	əɣ-ə	'people'
3	əɣə -pɔmə	'builders'
4	əɣ- ɔin	'children'
5	əɣ -áku	'orphans'

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

PR.7. $\begin{bmatrix} + \text{ syll} \\ - \text{ tense} \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow \phi / - \begin{bmatrix} + \text{ syll} \\ - \text{ tense} \end{bmatrix} + -$

This shwa deletion process is demonstrated in a sample derivation as

UR##əɣɔ + phâ##əɣɔ +aku

PR7 ——— əɣ aku

SR /əɣɔ phâ_/ /əɣ aku_/

It is worth noting here that when the prefix /əɣɔ-/ precedes the diphthong /ãi/ of the stem this diphthong changes to /ɔ̃i/.

There is plausible synchronic explanation from /ãi/ to /ɔ̃i/ The explanation is that /ɣ/ is a back(/-ant/) and as such /a/ wich is front /+ ant/, has to change to /ɔ/ to suit the place of articulation of /ɣ/.

The prefix of class 2 corresponds to the proto-ring prefix /bá-/.

3.2.3. Class 3.

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

Ex. 14.

1	ə́-kāf	'armpit'
2	ə́-kám	'thousand'
3	ə́-səŋ́	'bag'
4	ə́-khîŋ	'boundary stem'
5	ə́-túm	'message'
6	ə́-sáʔ	'case'
7	ə́-tɔ́ʔ	'palace'
8	ə́-tsínə̀	'behaviour'

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

3.2.4. Class 4.

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

Ex.15.

1	ə́sə́-kāf	'armpits'
2	ə́sə́-kám	'thousands'
3	ə́sə́-səŋ́	'bags'
4	ə́sə́-khîŋ	'boundary stems'
5	ə́sə́-túm	'messages'
6	ə́sə́-sáʔ	'cases'
7	ə́sə́-tɔʔ	'palaces'
8	ə́sə́-tsínə̀	'behaviours'

The prefix /ə́sə́-/ corresponds to the proto-ring /í-/.

3.2.5. Class 5.

The prefix for this class has two alternants /á-/ and /í-/. When one looks at the environments of /á-/ and /í-/, one realises that /á-/ appears before stems starting with /f̄/, and/k̄/ while /í-/ appears in stems starting with /f̄/, /w̄/, /k̄ʸ/, /p̄/, /z̄/, /t/ and /ʃ/ which are /-back/, from this analysis, it can be postulated that /á-/ 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 - fū	'farm'
2	á - kú	'forest'
3	á - kúm	'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 - pɔ̂ŋ	'jaw'
2	í - záf	'illness'
3	í - píŋ	'dance'
4	í - tɔ́f	'intelligence'
5	í - fú	'leaf'
6	í - wás	'waterfall'
7	í - ʃí	'grave'
8	í - ká	'wheel'

Group 5c Nouns without plurals eg.

Ex.18.

1	ɨ́-sáŋnê	'happiness'
2	ɨ́-tsɜ̃f	'beauty'
3	ɨ́-ʒá	'madness'
4	ɨ́-tʃɔ́ŋ	'theft'
5	ɨ́-wúl	'rain'
6	ɨ́-wêŋ	'grass'

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

PR 8. /[+ syll]/ ——> /[- high]/ ## -

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

3.2.6. Class 6.

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

Group 1. Nouns with singulars in class 5 eg.

Ex. 19.

1	ḿ - fɑ?	'farms'

2	ḿ - kú	'forets'
3	ḿ - fú	'medecines'
4	ḿ - wús	'guns'
5	ḿ - k^{y}ú	'beds'

Group 2. Nouns with singulars in class 13 eg

Ex.20.

1	ḿ - lám	'nets'
2	ḿ - kâʔ	'trees'
3	ḿ - támúʔ	'cats'
4	ḿ - tám	' fruits'
5	ḿ - túʔ	'days'
6	ḿ - lí	' stars'
7	ḿ - nêŋ	' birds'
8	ḿ - ɣâm	'mats'

When one looks at the environment of /ḿ-/, it will be realised that it appears before consonants that share the same articulatory features with /ḿ-/ as well as those that do not share articulatony features with /ḿ-/. This leads to the suggestion that the original prefix might have been /mə̀-/ which later lost the shwa to become /ḿ-/. 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 /Mə̀-/ and class 6 and 6a share the same nominal features and concord elements. The proto-ring equivalent for class 6 is /á-/.

3.2.7. Class 6a.

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

Ex. 21.

1	ḿ-mó	'water'
2	ḿ-dəm	'blood'
3	ḿ-tʃí	'soil'
4	m̀-kàŋ	'gravel'
5	ḿ-tsə́l	'pus'
6	ḿ-yîŋ	'breast-milk'
7	ḿ-kaîn	'gun-powder'

As is the case with the class 6 prefix, it can be said that the prefix of 6a might have been/Mə̀-/ which later lost the following shwa. The proto-ring prefix for class 6a is /Mə̀-/. The only difference between Mmen class 6a and Proto-ring class 6a is that the proto-ring prefix has a following shwa which the Mmen prefix lacks.

3.2.8. Class 7.

The class 7 prefix is/á-/. Nouns in this class include:

Ex. 22.

1	á-kwàlà	'prostitute'
2	á-kás	'zinc'(sing)
3	á-ɣâ	'faeces'(sing)
4	á-kᵊm	'winding sheet'
5	á-wámnè	'cross'
6	á-fúl	'mouse'
7	á-típàŋ	'tobacco'
8	á-fâtè	'a pair of scissors'
9	á-ɜɔ̀ʔ	'mushroom'
10	á-wú	'hand'

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. Class 8.

The prefix for this class has two alternants /í-/ and /ɔ́-/. Examples of class 8 nouns are

Ex. 23.

1	í-kwàlà	'prostitutes'
2	í-kwɑ́s	'zinc' (pl)
3	í-ɣâ	'faeces' (pl(
4	í-kɨm	'winding-sheets'
5	í-wámnè	'crosses'
6	í-fúl	'mice'
7	í-típàŋ	'tobacco' (pl)
8	í-fâtè	'pairs of scissors'
9	ɔ́-ʒɔ̀ʔ	'mushrooms'
10	ɔ́-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 occurence. 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 abready undergone the process of lowering while the rest are yet to do so.

The proto-ring prefix for class 8 is /bí-/.

3.2.10. Class 9.

The prefix for this class is /N-/. Examples of nouns with this prefix include :

Ex. 24.

1	m̀-mùl	'swelling'
2	ḿ-bélé	'caterpillar'
3	ń-dɔ́ŋ	'horn'
4	ǹ-dɔ̀ŋ	'potatoe'
5	ǹ-dʒàŋ	'song'
6	ŋ̀-gɔ̀in	'girl'
7	ŋ̀-gàm	'week'
8	ŋ̀-gwà?	'seed'

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

PR9 /[+ nas]/ ——> $\begin{bmatrix} \alpha \text{ ant} \\ \beta \text{ cor} \end{bmatrix} / - \begin{bmatrix} \alpha \text{ ant} \\ \beta \text{ cor} \end{bmatrix}$

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 L ——> H/H-

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

UR## N + bélé## N + dɔ́ŋ##N+gam ##

PR.9	mbélé	ndɔ́ŋ	ŋgàm
PR.10	mbélé	ńdɔ́ŋ	ŋgam
SR	/m̀bélé/	/ńdɔ́ŋ/	/ŋ̀gàm/

The prefix /Ǹ-/ corresponds to proto-ring /Ǹ-/.

3.2.11. Class 10.

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

Ex. 25.

1	ə́sə́-m̀-mùl	'swellings'
2	ə́sə́-mə́-bélé	'caterpillar'
3	ə́sə́-nə́-dɔ́ŋ	'horns'
4	ə́sə́-ǹ-dɔ̀ŋ	'potatoes'
5	ə́sə́-ǹ-dʒə̀ŋ	'songs'
6	ə́sə́-ŋ̀-gɔ̀in	'girls'
7	ə́sə́-ŋ̀-gàm	'weeks'
8	ə́sə́-ŋ̀-gwà?	'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) Mmen class 3 prefix has no similarity with the prefix of class 9. That of class 3 is /ə́-/ and that of 9 is /Ǹ-/. 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 prononn '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 /-sə̀/ as its concord marker, class 10 has both a prefix /sə́-/ and a suffix /-sə̀/.

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

Elucidations for these difference 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 /-SÍ/.

3.2.12. Class 13.

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

Ex. 26.

1	ə́tə́-pə̂ŋ	'jaw'
2	ə́tə́-zāf	'illnesses'
3	ə́tə́-tɔ́f	'intelligence'(pl)
4	ə́tə́-pí ŋ	'dances'
5	ə́tə́-fú	'leaves'

6	ə́tə́- wás	waterfalls'
7	ə́tə́- ʃí	'graves'
8	ə́tə́- ká	'wheels'

The proto-ring prefix for class 13 is /tə́-/. When nouns of this class are tested with satellites of the head noun (eg adjectives, numerals, etc) the concord element is /tə́-/. Giwen this, the feeling is that with time the initial shwa of the prefix /ə́tə́-/ will be lost.

3.2.13. Class 19.

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

Ex.27.

1	ə́tə́-làm	'net'
2	ə́fə́-kâ	'tree'
3	əfə-támú?	'cat'
4	ə́fə́-tám	'fruit'
5	ə́fə́-nêŋ	'bird'
6	ə́fə́-ɣâm	'mat'
7	ə́fə́- lí	'star'

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

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.

Class	Proto-Ring	Mmen	Mmen Example	Gloss
1	Ú	ə-, əw-, əv-	ə- phâ əw-uɔ̀ əv-ain	'father' 'person' 'child'
2	bá-	əɣə-	əɣə-phâ əɣ-ə əɣ-ɔin	'fathers' 'people' 'children'
3	Ú-	ə-	ə-kāf	'armpit'
4	Í-	əsə-	əsə-kāf	'armpits'
5	Í-	á-, í-	á-fû? í-fú	'farm' 'medicine'
6	á-	m-	m-fû? m-fú	'farms' 'medecines'
6a	mà-	m-	m-yîŋ	'breast-milk'
7	kí-	á-	á-kwālà	'prostitute'
8	bí-	í-	í-kwālà	'prostitutes'
9	Ń-,ø-	Ń-	ŋ-gâm	'week'
10	-sí	əsə-	əsə-ŋ-gàm	'weeks'
13	tə-	ətə-	ətə-píŋ	'dances'
19	fə-	əfə-	əfə-kâ?	'tree'

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 prefixe /ə́-/ is realised as either /ə́-/, /ə́w-/ or /ə́v-/. The insertion of /ˉw-/ and /v/ 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 /ɣ̄/ coming in to replace /ˉW/ and /ˉV/ of the class 1 prefix, any stem with the diphthong /ˉai/, has this diphthong immediately changed to /ɔ̄i/.

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 betwwen 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 caterion 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.

/ə́w-uɔ̀ # və́m/ ————> [ə́w-uɔ̀ ø-və́m] 'my person'
person my
/ə̌w-uɔ̀# vɛ̄/ ————> [ə̌w-uɔ̀ ø-vɛ̄] 'your(sing) person'
person your(sing)

/ə́w-uɔ̀ # vaîn/ ———>/ə̄w-uɔ̀ ø-vaîn/ 'your(pl) person'
person your(pl)

/ə́w-uɔ̀ # və́ / ———>/ ̄w-u ø-v _/ 'his/her person'
person his/her

/ə́w-uɔ̀#vásè/ ———>/ə̄w-uɔ̀ ø-vasè/ 'our person'
person our

/ə́w-uɔ̀#ɣə́nə̂/ ———>/ə̄w-uɔ̀ ø-ɣənə̂/ 'their person'
person their

Ex. 30. Class 2

/əɣ-ə́# və́m/———>/ə̄ɣ-ə ø-və́m/ 'my people'
people my

/ə́ɣ-ə́#ɣɛ́ /———>/ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø-ɣɛ/ 'your(sing) people'
people your(sing)

/əɣ-ə́# vaîn/——>/ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø-vaîn/ 'your (pl) people
people your(pl)

/ə́ɣ-ə́# və́ŋ/——> /ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø- və́ŋ_/ 'his/her people'
people his/her

/əɣ-ə́# vásè/ ——>/ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø-vásè/ 'our people'
people our

/ə́ɣ -ə́#ɣə́nə̂/ ———>/ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø-ɣə́ nə̂/ 'their people'
people their

Ex. 31. Class 3

/ə́ -kāf # zə̂m/ —> /ə́-kāf ø-zə̂m/ 'my armpit'
armpit my

/ə́-kāf # zɛ́/——> /ə́-kāf ø - zɛ́/ 'your (sing)armpit'
armpit your (sing)

/ə́-kāf # zaîn/ ——>/ə́-kaf ø-zaîn/ 'your(pl) armpit'
armpit your(pl)

/ə́-kāf # və́ŋ/——> /ə̄́-kāf ø-və́ŋ/ 'his/her armpit'
armpit his/her

/ə́-kāf # ɣə́sè/—> /ə̄́-kāf ø-ɣə́sè/ 'our armpit'
armpit our

/ə́-kāf # ɣə́nə̂/ —> /ə̄́-kāf ø-ɣə́nə̂/ 'their armpit'
armpit their

Ex. 32. Class 4.

/ə́sə́-kāf # sə̂m/—> /ə̄́sə́-kāf sə̂m-sə̄́/ 'my armpits'
armpits my

/ə́sə́-kaf # sɛ̄/ ——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf sɛ̄-sə̄́/ 'your(sing) armpits'
armpits your(sing)

/ə́sə́-kāf # saîn/ ——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf saîn-sə̄́/ 'your (pl)armpits'
armpit your(pl)

/ə́sə́-kāf # və́ŋ/——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf sə́-və́ŋ-sə̄́/ 'his/her armpits'
armpits his/her

/ə́sə́-kāf # sə́sé/ —> /ə̄́sə́-kāf ø-sə́sé/ 'our armpits'
armpits our

/ə́sə́-kāf #ɣə́nə̀/ ——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf ɣə́nə̀ - sə̀/ 'their armpits'
armpits their

Ex. 33 Class 5

/á-kúm # kə́mə́/ —> /ā́-kúm ø-kə́mə́/ ' my juju'
juju my

/á-kúm # kéyá/ —> /ā́-kúm ø-kéya/ 'your(sing) juju'
juju your(sing)

/á-kúm # káná /——> /¯á-kúm ø-kánā́/ 'your(pl)juju'
juju your(pl)

/á-kúm # vā/ ——> /¯á-kúm ø-vā́/ 'his/her juju'
juju his/her

/á-kúm # késá/ ——> /¯á-kúm ø-késá/ 'our juju'
juju our

/á-kúm #ɣə́nə̀/ ——> /¯a-kum ø-ɣə́nə̀/ 'their juju'
juju their

Ex. 34 Class 6

/ḿ-kúm # mə́m/ —> /¯ḿ-kúm ø-mə́m/ 'my jujus'
jujus my

/ḿ-kúm # və́m / —> /m̄́-kúm ḿ-və́m/ 'your(sing) jujus'
jujus your(sing)

/ḿ-kúm # vaîn/ —> /m̄́-kúm ḿ-vaîn/ 'your(pl) jujus'
jujus your(pl)

/ḿ-kúm # və́ŋ /——> /m̄́-kúm ḿ-və́ŋ/ 'his/her jujus'
jujus his/her

/ḿ-kúm # másə̀m/ ——>/m̄́-kúm ø-másə̀m/ 'our jujus'
jujus our

/ḿ-kúm #ɣə́nə̀/——> /m̄́-kúm ḿ-ɣə́nə̀/ 'their jujus'
jujus their

Ex. 35. Class 6a.

/ḿ-l‡ # mə́m/ ——> /¯ḿ- ‡ ø-mə́m/ ' my wine'
wine my

/ḿ-l‡ # və́m/——>/¯ḿ-l‡ ḿ-və́m/ 'your(sing)wine'
wine your(sing)

/ḿ-l‡ # vaîn/ —> /m̄́-l‡ ḿ- vaîn/ 'your (pl) wine'
wine your(pl)

/ḿ-l ‡ # və́ŋ/——> /m̄́- l ‡ ḿ-və́ŋ/ 'his/her wine'
wine his/her

/ḿ-l‡ # másə̀m/ —>/¯ḿ-l‡ ø-másə̀m/ 'our wine'
wine our

/ḿ-l‡ #ɣə́nə̀/——> /m̄́-l‡ ḿ-ɣə́nə̀/ 'their wine'
wine their

Ex. 36 Class 7

/á-wámnè # kəmə́/——) /ã́-wámnè ø-kəmə́7 'my cross'
cross my

/á-wámnè # kéyá/—> /ã́-wámnè ø-kéyá7 'your(sing)cross'
cross your(sing)

/á-wámnè # káná/—> /ã́-wámnè ø-káná7 'your(pl) cross'
cross your(pl)

/á-wámnè # va/—> /ã́-wámnè ø-vá7 'his/her cross'
cross his/her

/á-wámnè # késá/—> /ã́-wámnè ø-késá7 'our cross'
cross our

/á-wámnè # ɣəńnə̂/—> /ã́-wámnè ø-ɣəńnə̂7 'their cross'
cross their

Ex. 37. Class 8

/í-wámnè # vəm/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-vəm7 'my crosses
crosses my

/í-wámnè # vɛ̃/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-vɛ̃7 'your(sing) crosses'
crosses your(sin)

/í-wámnè # vaîn/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-vaîn7 'your(pl)crosses'
crosses your(pl)

/í-wámnè # vəŋ/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-vəŋ7 'his/her crosses'
crosses his/her

/í-wámnè # vásè/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-vásè7 'our crosses'
crosses our

/í-wámnè # ɣə́nə̂/—> /ĩ́-wámnè ø-ɣə́nə̂7 'their crosses'
crosses their

Ex. 38. Class 9

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # zə̂m/—> /˜ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-zə́m7 'my horn'
horn my

/ń-dɔ́ŋ# zɛ̄/——> /¯ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-zɛ̄/ 'your(sing) horn'
horn your(sing)

/ń-dɔ́ŋ# zaîn/——>/¯ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-zaîn/ 'your (pl) horn'
horn your(pl)

/ń-dɔ́ŋ# və́ŋ/——> /¯ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-və́ŋ/ 'his/her horn'
horn his/her

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # zásè/ —>/¯ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-zásè/ 'our horn'
horn our

/ń-dɔŋ#ɣə́nə̂/——>/¯ń-dɔ́ŋ ø-ɣə́nə̂/ 'their horn'
horn their

Ex. 39. Class 10.

/ɘsə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# sə́m/——>/ə̄sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́m-sə̄/ 'my horns'
horns my

/ɘ́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# sɛ̄/——>/ə̄sə́-ń-dɔŋ sɛ́-sə̄/ 'your(sing)horns'
horns your(sing)

/ɘsə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# saîn/—> /ə̄sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ saîn-sə̄/ 'your(pl)horns'
horns your(pl)

/ɘsə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# və́ŋ/——> /ə̄sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə-və́ŋ-sə̄/ 'his/her horns'
horns his/her

/ɘsə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# sásè/——>/ə̄sə́-ń-dɔŋø-sásè/ 'our horns'
horns our

/ɘsə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ# ɣə́nə̂/——>/ə̄sə́- ń- dɔ́ŋø-ɣə́nə̄/ 'their horns'
horns their

Ex. 40. Class 13.

/ətə́-pɔ̂ŋ# tə́m/——>/ə̄tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́m-tə̄/ 'my jaws'
jaws my

/ɘtə́-pɔ̂ŋ# tɛ́/——> /ə̄tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tɛ́-tə̄/ 'your(sing) jaws'
jaws your(sing)

/ətə́-pɔ̂ŋ # taîn/——>/ə̀tə́-pɔ̂ŋ taîn-tə̀/ 'your(pl) jaws'
jaws your(pl)

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ# vəŋ́/——>/ə̀tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-vəŋ́-tə̀/ 'his/her jaws'
jaws his/her

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ# tástə́/——> /ə̀tə́-pɔ̂ŋ ø-tástə́/ 'our jaws'
jaws our

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ#ɣə́nə̂/——>/ə̀tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-ɣə́nə̂-tə̀/ 'their jaws'
jaws their

Ex. 41. Class 19.

/ə́fə́-tám # fə́m/——>/ə̀fə́-tám fə́m-fə̀/ ' my fruit'
fruit my

/ə́fə́-tám # fə́/——>/ə̀fə́-tám fə́-fə̀/ 'your(sing) fruit'
fruit your(sing)

/ə́fə́-tám # faín/ ——>/ə̀fə́-tám faín-fə̀/ 'your(pl) fruit'
fruit your(pl)

/ə́fə́-tám # vəŋ́/ ——>/ə̀fə́-tám fə́-vəŋ́-fə̀/ 'his/her fruit'
fruit his/her

/ə́fə́- tám # fás/ ——>/ə̀fə́-tám fás-fə̀/ 'our fruit'
fruit our

/ə́fə́-tám #ɣə́nə̂/——>/ə̀fə́-tám fə́-ɣənə̂-fə̀/ 'their fruit'
fruit 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 /ø-/ 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 /-sə́/, class 10 has a zero /ø-/ morpheme.

- The concord elements of classes 4,10, 13 and 14 are /sə́-/, /sə́-/, /tə́-/ and /fə́-/. The prefixes for these classes are /ə́sə́-/, /ə́sə́/, /ə́tə́-/ and /ə́fə́-/ 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.

Class	my	your(sing)	your(pl)	his/her	our	their
1	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-
2	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-
3	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-
4	-sə́	-sə́	-sə́	sə́-, -sə́	ø-	-sə́
5	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-
6	ø-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-
6a	ø-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-	ḿ-
7	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-
8	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø
9	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-	ø-

10	-sə́	-sə́	-sə́	sə́-, -sə́	ø-	ø-
13	-tə́	-tə́	-tə́	tə́-, -tə́	ø	tə́-, -tə́
14	ø-	-fə́	-fə́	fə́-, -fə́	ø	fə́-, -fə́

Fig. 6.

4.1.2. ADJECTIVE (A).

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

Ex. 42 Class 1.

/ə́w-uɔ́ # ɣá?á/ ———> /ə̰́w-uɔ́ ø-ɣá?á̰/ 'big person'
person big

/ə́w-uɔ́ # fə́fə́/ ———> /ə̰́w-uɔ́ ø-fə́fə̰́/ 'white person'
person white

/ə́w-uɔ́ # pí/ ———> /ə̰́w-uɔ́ ø-pḭ́/ 'bad person'
person bad

/ə́w-uɔ́ # fə́mə́/ ———> /ə̰́w-uɔ́ ø-fə́mə̰́/ 'black person'
person black

Ex. 43 Class 2.

/ə́ɣ-ə́ # ɣá?á/ ———> /ə̰́ɣ-ə́ ɣə́-ɣá?á̰/ 'big people'
people big

/ə́ɣ-ə́ # fə́fə́/ ———> /ə̰́ɣ-ə́ ɣə́-fə́fə̰́/ 'white people'
people white

/ə́ɣ-ə́ # pí /———> /ə̰́ɣ-ə́ ɣə́-pḭ́/ 'bad people'
people bad

/ə́ɣ-ə # fə́mə́/———> /ə̰́ɣ-ə́ ɣə́-fə́mə̰́/ 'black people'
people black

Ex. 44 Class 3

/ə́-kāf # ɣá?á/——>/ə̄́-kāf ə́-ɣá?a̲/ 'big armpit'
armpit big

/ə́-kāf # fəfə́/——>/ə̄́-kāf ə́-fə́fə̲́/ 'white armpit'
armpit white

/ə́-kāf # pí/ ——>/ə̄́-kāf ə́-pí̲/ ' bad armpit'
armpit bad

/ə́-kāf # fə́mə́/——>/ə̄́-kāf ə́-fə́mə̲́/ 'black armpit'
armpit black

Ex. 45 Class 4.

/ə́sə́-kāf # ɣá?á/ ——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf sə́-ɣá?á̲/ 'big armpits'
armpits big

/ə́sə́-kāf # fəfə́/——>/ə̄sə-kāf sə́-fə́fə̲́/ 'white armpits'
armpits white

/ə́sə́-kāf # pí/ ——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf sə-pí̲/ 'bad armpits'
armpits bad

/ə́sə́-kāf # fə́mə́/——>/ə̄́sə́-kāf sə́-fə́mə̲́/ 'black armpit'
armpits black

Ex. 46 Class 5.

/á-kúm # ɣá?á/——>/ā́-kúm ə́-ɣá?á̲/ 'big juju'
juju big

/á-kúm # fə́fə́/——>/ā́-kúm ə́-fə́fə̲́/ 'white juju'
juju white

/á-kúm # pí/ ——>/ā́-kúm ə́-pí̲/ 'bad juju'
juju bad

/á-kúm # fə́mə́/——>/ā́-kúm ə́-fə́mə̲́/ 'black juju'
juju black

Ex.47 Class 6.

/ḿ-kúm # ɣáʔá / ——>/m̄́-kúm ḿ- ɣáʔá/ 'big jujus'
jujus big

/ḿ-kúm # fəfə́/ ——>/m̄́-kúm ḿ-fəfə́/ 'white jujus'
jujus white

/ḿ-kúm # pí/——> /m̄́-kúm ḿ-pîm/ 'bad jujus'
jujus bad

/ḿ-kúm # fəmə́/ ——>/m̄́-kúm ḿ-fəmə́/ 'black jujus'
jujus black.

Ex. 48 Class 6a

/ḿ-ɬ # ɣáʔá/——>/ˉḿ-ɬ ḿ-ɣáʔá/ 'big wine'
wine big

/ḿ-ɬ # fəfə́/——>/ˉḿ-ɬ ḿ-fəfə́/ 'white wine'
wine white

/ḿ-ɬ # pí/ ——>/ˉḿ-ɬ ḿ-pîm/ 'bad wine'
wine bad

/ḿ-ɬ # fəmə́/——>/ˉḿ-ɬ ḿ-fəmə́/ 'black wine'
wine black

Ex. 49 Class 7

/á-wámnè #ɣáʔá/ ——>/ā́-wámnè á-ɣáʔá/ 'big cross'
cross big

/á-wámnè # fəfə́/——>/ā́-wámnè á-fəfə́/ 'white cross'
cross white

/á-wámnè # pí/ ——>/ā́-wámnè á-pí/ 'bad cross'
cross bad

/á-wámnè # fəmə́/——>/ā́-wámnè a-fəmə́/ 'black cross'
cross black

Ex. 50. Class 8

/ɪ́-wámnè# ɣáʔá/——>/ɪ̄́-wámnè ɪ́-ɣáʔā́/ 'big crosses'
crosses big

/ɪ́-wámnè # fə́fə́/——>/ɪ̄́-wámnè ɪ́-fə́fə̄́/ 'white crosses'
crosses white

/ɪ́-wámnè # pí/ ——>/ɪ̄́-wámnè ɪ́-pī́/ ' bad crosses'
crosses bad

/ɪ́-wámnè # fə́mə́/——>/ɪ̄́-wámnè ɪ́-fə́mə̄́/ 'black crosses'
crosses black

Ex. 51. Class 9

/ń̄-dɔ́ŋ # ɣáʔá/——>/ń̄-dɔ́ŋ ɪ́-ɣaʔā/ 'big horn'
horn big

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # fə́fə́/——> /ń̄́ -dɔŋ ɪ́-fə́fə̄́/ 'white horn'
horn white

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # pí / ——>/ ̄ń-dɔ́ŋ ɪ́-pī́/ 'bad horn'
horn bad

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # fə́mə́/——>/ń̄-dɔ́ŋ ɪ́-fə́mə̄́/ 'black horn'
horn black

Ex. 52 Class 10.

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ#ɣáʔá/——>/ə̄́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-ɣáʔā́-sə̀/ big horns'
horns big

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # fə́fə́/——>/ə̄́sə-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-fə́fə́- sə̀/ 'white horns
horns white

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # pí/ ——>/ə̄́sə-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-pí-sə̀/ 'bad horns'
horns bad

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # fə́mə́/——>/ə̄́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋsə́-fəmə-sə̀/ 'black horns'
horns black

Ex. 53. Class 13.

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ#ɣá'á/——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-ɣá'á-tə̀/ 'big jaws'
jaws big

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ#fə́fə́/——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-fə́fə́-tə̀/ 'white jaws'
jaws white

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ#pí/ ——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-pí-tə̀/ 'bad jaws'
jaws bad

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ#fə́mə́/——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́- fə́mə́-tə̀/ 'black jaws'
jaws black

Ex. 54. Class 14.

/ə́fə́-tám#ɣá'á/——>/ə̃́fə́-tám fə́-ɣá'á-fə̀/ 'big fruit'
fruit big

/ə́fə́-tám#fə́fə́/——>/ə̃́fə́-tám fə́-fə́fə́-fə̀/ 'white fruit'
fruit white

/ə́fə́-tám# pí/——>/ə̃́fə́-tám fə́-pí-fə̀/ 'bad fruit'
fruit bad

/ə́fə́-tám# fə́mə́/——>/ə̃́fə́-tám fə́-fə́mə́-fə̀/ 'black fruit'
fruit black

The juxtaposition of the headnoun with the adjective (qualifiying) 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 /sə́-/, a prefix, class 10 is marked both by prefix /sə́-/ and suffix /-sə̀/.
- Classes 8 and 9 share the same concord morpheme /í-/
- Class 5 has /ə́-/ as its concord marker which is different from its nominal prefix /á-/.
- Classes 3 and 5 share the same concord element /ə́-/.

A recapitulative table of the A concord elements is presented below :

Class	Concord Element
1	ø-
2	ɣə́-
3	ə́ -
4	sə́-
5	ə́ -
6	m̀-
6a	ḿ-
7	à-
8	ì-
9	í-
10	sə́-
13	tə́-, -tə́-
19	fə́-, -fə́

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.

/ʒ́w-uɔ́ # mɔ́ʔ /——>/ʒ̄w-uɔ̄ ə́-mɔ́ʔ/ 'one person'
person one

Ex. 56. Class 2

/ə́ɣ-ə́ # pɛ̄/——>/ə̄ɣ-ə́ ø-pɛ̄/ ' two people'
people two

/əɣ-ə́ # tá/——>/əɣ-ə́ ø-tā/ 'three people'
people three

/əɣ-ə́# kʸɛ́'/——>/əɣ-ə́ ø-kʸɛ̄/ ' four people'
people four

Ex. 57. Class 3.

/ə́-kāf # mɔ̀ʔ/——>/ə́-kāf ə́-mɔ̀ʔ/ 'one armpit'
armpit one

Ex.58. Class 4

/ə́sə́-kāf # pɛ̄/——>/ə́sə́-kāf sə́-pɛ̄/ 'two armpits'
armpits two

/ə́sə́-kāf # tá/——>/ə́sə́-kāf sə́-tā/ 'three armpits'
armpit three

/ə́sə́-kāf # kʸɛ́ /——>/ə́sə́-kāf sə́-kʸɛ́_/ 'four armpits'
armpits four

Ex. 59 Class 5

/á-kúm # mɔ̀ʔ /——>/á-kúm ə́-mɔ̀ʔ/ 'one juju'
juju one

Ex.60. Class 6

/ḿ-kúm # pɛ̄/——>/ḿ-kúm ḿ-pɛ̄/ 'two jujus'
jujus two

/ḿ-kúm # tá/——>/ḿ-kúm ḿ-tā/ 'three jujus'
jujus three

/ḿ-kúm # kʸɛ́ /——>/ḿ-kúm ḿ-kʸɛ́_/ ' four jujus'
jujus four

Ex. 61. Class 7

/á-wámnɛ̀ # mɔ̀ʔ/——>/á-wámnɛ̀ á-mɔ̀ʔ/ 'one cross'
cross one

Ex. 62 Class 8

/í-wámnè # pɛ̄/——>/ī́-wámnè í-pɛ̄́/ 'two crosses'
crosses two

/í-wámnè # tá/——>/ī́-wámnè í-tā́/ 'three crosses'
crosses three

/í-wámnè # kʸê /——>/ī́-wámnè í-kʸê_/ 'four crosses'
crosses four

Ex. 63 Class 9

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # mɔ̀ʔ/——>/¯ń-dɔ́ŋ í-mɔ̀ʔ/ 'one horn'
horn one

Ex. 64. Class 10.

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # pɛ̄/——>/ə̄́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-pɛ̄́/ 'two horns'
horns two

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # tá/——>/ə̄́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-tā́/ 'three horns'
horns three

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ #kʸê /——>/ə̄́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ sə́-kʸê_/ 'four horns'
horns four

Ex.65 Class 13.

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ # pɛ̄/——>/ə̄́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-pɛ̄́/ 'two jaws'
jaws two

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ # tá/——>/ə̄́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-tá_/ 'three jaws'
jaws three

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ #kʸê /——>/ə̄́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ tə́-kʸê_/ '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 /ə́-/ 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.

Class	my one	p two	ta three	$k^{y}ê$ four
1	ə́-	-	-	-
2	-	ø-	ø-	ø-
3	ə́-	-	-	-
4	-	sə́-	sə́-	sə́-
5	ə́-	-	-	-
6	-	mə́-	mə́-	mə́-
6a	-	-	-	-
7	á-	-	-	-
8	-	í-	í-	í-
9	í-	-	-	-
10	-	sə́-	sə́-	sə́-
13	-	tə́-	tə́-	tə́-
19	fə́-	-	-	-

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 listner (NL) demonstratives 'that' and 'those' will be used to illustrate concord between head nouns and the demonstrative determiner.

Ex. 66 Class 1

/əw-uɔ # vəŋ/——>/əw-uɔ ø-vəŋ/ 'this person'
person this

/əw-uɔ # vî/——>/əw-uɔ ø-vî/ 'that person'
person that

Ex. 67 Class 2.

/əɣ-ə # ɣəŋ/——>/əɣ-ə ø-ɣəŋ/ 'these people'
people these

/əɣ-ə # ɣɛ̄ /——>/əɣ-ə ø-ɣɛ̄/ 'those people'
people those

Ex. 68. Class 3

/ə-kāf # zəŋ/——> /ə-kāf ø-zəŋ/ 'this armpit'
armpit this

/ə-kāf # ə/——>/ə-kāf ø- ə/ 'that armpit'
armpit that

Ex. 69. Class 4

/əsə-kāf # səŋ /——>/əsə-kāf ø-səŋ/ 'these armpits'
armpits these

/əsə-kāf # sɛ̄/——>/əsə-kāf ø- sɛ̄/ 'those armpits'
armpits those

Ex.70 Class 5

/á-kúm # kîŋ/——>/ ̄á-kúm ø-kîŋ/ 'this juju'
juju this

/á-kúm # k^{y}ê/——>/ ̄á-kúm ø-k^{y}ê/ 'that juju'
juju that

Ex. 71 Class 6

/ḿ-kúm # mə̀ŋ/——>/m̄́-kúm ø-mə̀ŋ/ 'these jujus'
jujus these

/ḿ-kúm # mɛ̄/——>/m̄́-kúm ø-mɛ̄/ 'those jujus'
jujus those

Ex. 72 Class 6a

/ḿ-l꜒ # mə̀ŋ/——>/m̄́-L꜒ ø-mə̀ŋ/ 'this wine'
wine this

/m-L꜒ # mɛ̄/——>/m̄́-L꜒ ø-mɛ̄/ 'that wine'
wine that

Ex. 73 Class 7

/á-wámnè # kə̀ŋ/——>/ ̄á-wámnè ø-kə̀ŋ/ 'this cross'
cross this

/á-wámnè # k^{y}ê/——>/ā́-wámnè ø-k^{y}ê/ 'that cross'
cross that

Ex. 74 Class 8

/í-wámnè # və̀ŋ/——>/ī́-wámnè ø-və̀ŋ/ 'these crosses'
cross these

/í-wámnè # vɛ̄/——>/ ̄í-wámnè ø-vɛ̄/ 'those crosses'
crosses those

Ex. 75 Class 9

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # zə̀ŋ/——>/ń̄-dɔ́ŋ ø-zə̀ŋ/ 'this horn'
horn this

/ń-dɔ̀ŋ # ə́/——>/ń̃-dɔ̀ŋ ø-ʒə́à/ 'that horn'
horn that

Ex. 76 Class 10

/ə́sə́ -ń-dɔ̀ŋ # sə̀ŋ/——>/ə̃́sə́-ń-dɔ̀ŋ ø-sə̀ŋ̃/ 'these horns'
horns these

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ̀ŋ# sɛ̃/——>/ə̃́sə́-ń-dɔŋ ø-sɛ̃/ 'those horns'
horns those

Ex. 77. Class 13.

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ # tə̀ŋ /——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ ø-tə̀ŋ̃/ 'these jaws'
jaws these

/ə́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ #tʸê/——>/ə̃́tə́-pɔ̂ŋ ø-tʸê/ 'those jaws'
jaws those

Ex. 78 Class 19.

/ə́fə́-tám # fə̀ŋ/——>/ə̃́fə́-tám ø-fə̀ŋ̃/ 'this fruit'
fruit this

/ə́fə́-tám # fʸê /——>/ə̃́fə́-tam ø-fʸê/ 'that fruit'
fruit that

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,/ø-/ 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 /ʒ̃ə̃/, that for 9 is /ʒ̃ə́à/. 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.

Class	this	that	these	those
1	ø-	ø-	-	-
2	-	-	ø-	ø-
3	ø-	ø-	-	-
4	-	-	ø-	ø-
5	ø-	ø-	-	-
6	-	-	ø-	ø-
6a	ø-	ø-	-	-
7	ø-	ø-	-	-
8	-	-	ø-	ø-
9	ø-	ø-	-	-
10	-	-	ø-	ø-
13	-	-	ø-	ø-
14	ø-	ø-	-	-

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.

/ɔ́w-uɔ́ #vaín/——>/ɔ̃́w-uɔ́ ø-vaín/ 'the person of the child'
person child

Ex. 80. Class 2

/ə́ɣ-ə́ #vaín/ ——>/ə̃́ɣ-ə́ ø-vaín/ 'the people of the child'
people child

Ex. 81. Class 3.

/ə́-kāf # vaín/—>/ə̃́-kāf ə́-vaín/ 'the armpit of the child'
armpit child

Ex. 82. Class 4

/ə́sə́-kāf # vaín/—>/ə̃́sə́-kâf sə́-vaín-sə́/ 'the armpits of
armpits child the child'

Ex. 83. Class 5

/á-kúm #vaín/—>/ã́-kúm ə́-vaín/ 'the juju of the child'
juju child

Ex. 84 Class 6.

/ḿ-kúm #vaín/—>/m̃́-kúm ḿ-vaín/ 'the jujus of the child'
jujus child

Ex. 85 Class 6a

/ḿ-l+ #vaín/—>/m̃́-l+ ḿ-vaín/ 'the wine of the child'
wine child

Ex. 86 Class 7

/á-wámnè # vaín/——>/ã́-wámnè ván-á/ 'the cross of the
cross child child'

Ex. 87. Class 8

/í-wámnè # vaín/—>/ĩ́-wámnè ván-í/ 'the crosses of the
crosses child child'

Ex. 88 Class 9

/ń-dɔ́ŋ # vaín/—>/ñ̲-dɔ́ŋ ø-vaín̲/ 'the horn of the child'
horn child

Ex. 89 Class 10

/ə́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋ # vaín/—>/ə̲́sə́-ń-dɔ́ŋsə́-vaín-sə̲́/ 'the horns of
horns child the child'

Ex. 90. Class 13.

/ə́tə́ -pɔ́ŋ#vaín/—>/ə̲́tə́-pɔ́ŋ tə́-vaín-tə̲́/ 'the jaws of the
jaws child child'

Ex. 91 Class 19.

/ə́fə́-tám # vaín/—>/ə̲́fə́-tám fə́-vaín-fə̲́/ 'the fruit of
fruit child the child'

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

- Classes 1 and 2 have the same concord element /ø-/. So too is the case with classes 4 and 10 whose conord element is /sə́-/.
- Class 9 has a /ø-/ concord element.
- The concord marker for class 5 is /ə́-/ which is different from its nominal prefix /á-/.

For purposes of clarity, a summary of the concord elements for the various classes is presented below :

Class	Concord Element
1	ø-
2	ø-
3	ə́-
4	sə́-
5	ə́-
6	ḿ-
6a	ḿ-
7	-á
8	-ı́
9	ø-
10	sə́-
13	tə́-
19	fə́-

Fig.10.

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

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

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

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

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

vii) Classes 8 and 9 nouns have identical concord morphemes /ø-/ (when tested with possessives and demonstratives) and /ɪ́-/ (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 /ø-/ 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 /sɔ́-/, /sɔ́-/, /tɔ́-/ and /fɔ́-/ res-

pectively are similar to those of their nominal prefixes /ə́sə́-/, /ə́ʃə́-/, /ə́tə́-/ and /ə́fə́-/ except that, in marking concord, these elements delete the initial vowel (shwa). This may be an indication that the initial vowel of the prefix will finally be deleted.

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

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

Classes 8 and 9 have /í-/ and /Ǹ-/ as their nominal prefixes respectively. But when nouns of these two classes are collocated with possessives and demonstratives their concord element is /ø-/. When tested with adjectives and numerals, their concor element is /í-/.

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) :

> *"In any Bantu language, most of the noun prefixes function as members of singular-plural pairs, though the pairing evident is only statistical, not on any formal basis; there is nothing that all singular prefixes or all plural prefixes have in common with each other."*

What is striking about gender in Bantu languages is that it does no 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 connot 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 can 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*

établies. Les marques formelles des classes sont soit des affixes, soit les tons."

5.1. GENDER AND SEMANTIC CONTENT.

To establish gender in Mmen, the affixes as well as semantic content of various nouns have been tâken 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 dimunitives.

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.

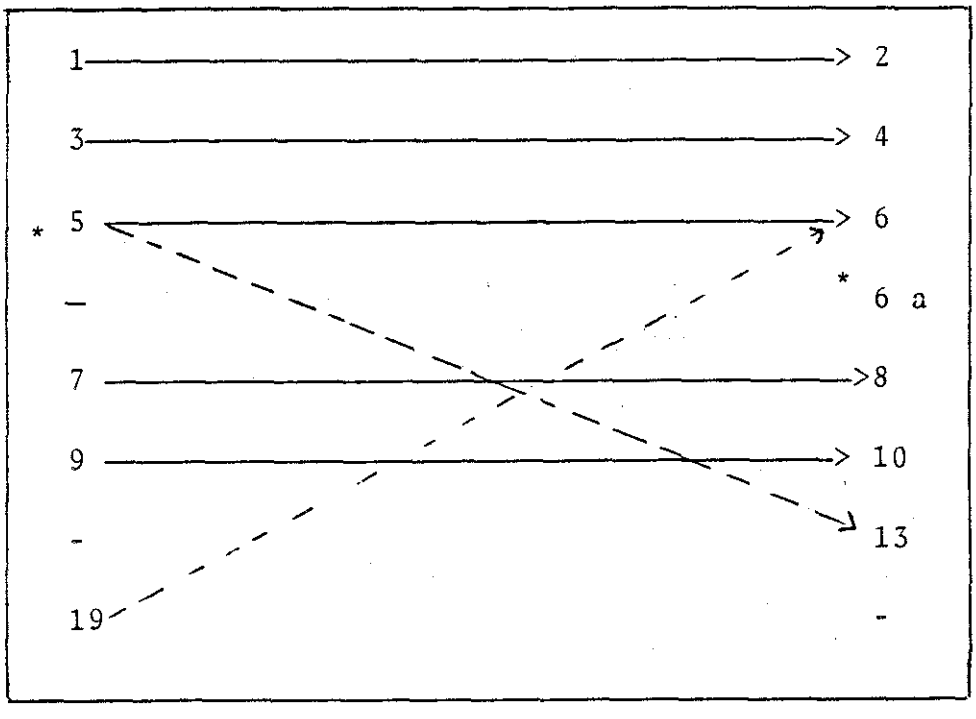


Fig 11

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 examplified below :

Ex. 43.

1	ə́-pʰâ	'father'	ə́ɣə́-pʰâ	'fathers'
2	ə́w-uə̀	'person'	ə́ɣ-ə́	'people'
3	ə́w-áfə́f	'wretech'	ə́ɣ-áfə́f	'wretches'
4	ə́v-aín	'child'	ə́ɣ-ɔ́ín	'children'
5	ə́v-ákú	'orphan'	ə́ɣ-ákú	'orphans'

5.2.1.2. Gender. 3/4

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

- Animate nouns.

Ex. 44

1	ə́-pfə́	'goat'	ə́sə́-pfə́	'goats'
2	ə́-ʧə̂ŋ	'cricket'	ə́sə́-ʧə̂ŋ	'crickets'
3	ə́-fɔ̀in	'chief'	ə́sə́-fɔ̀in	'chiefs'
4	ə́-pú	'dog'	ə́sə́-pú	'dogs'
5	ə́-ʒə́dɛ̄	'successor'	ə́sə́-ʒə́dɛ̄	'successors'

- Inanimate nouns

Ex. 45

1	ə́-tɔ́ʔ	'palace'	ə́sə́-tɔ́ʔ	'palaces'
2	ə́-ká́m	'thousand'	ə́sə́-ká́m	'thousands'
3	ə́-túm	'message'	ə́sə́-túm	'messages'
4	ə́-tsə̀m	'dream'	ə́sə́-tsə̀m	'dreams
5	ə́-Sáʔ	'case'	ə́sə́-sáʔ	'cases'

- Part of the body nouns

Ex. 46

1	ə́-kāf	'armpit'	ə́sə́-kāf	'armpits'
2	ə́-tsə́m	'back'	ə́sə́-tsə́m	'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-fû	'farm'	ḿ-fû	'farms'
2	á-kú	'forest'	ḿ-kú	'forests'

- Miscellaneous nouns.

Ex. 48.

1	á-kúm	'juju'	ḿ-kúm	'jujus'
2	í-fú	'medecine'	ḿ-fú	'medecines'
3	í-wús	'gun'	ḿ-wús	'guns'
4	í-kʸú	'bed'	ḿ-kʸú	'beds'

5.2.1.4. Gender 7/8

This gender contains animate and inanimate nouns as follows:

- Animate nouns.

Ex. 49.

1	á-kwàlà	prostitute'	í-kwàlà	'prostitutes'
2	á-fəʃəm	'cockroach'	í-fəʃəm	'cockroaches'
3	á-fúl	'mouse'	í-fúl	'mice'
4	á-tʃàmàkès	'frog'	í-tʃwɔ̀màkès	'frogs'
5	á-zà?	'mushroom'	ə́-zɔ?	mushrooms

- Inanimate nouns

Ex. 50

1	á-wámnè	'cross'	í-wámnè	'crosses'
2	á-kás	'zinc'	í-kwás	'zinc' pl
3	á-fâtè	'a pair of scissors'	í-fâtè	'pairs of scissors'

4	á-kə̂m	'crab'	í-kwə̂m	'crabs'
5	á-zɔ̀ʔ	cough'	ə́-zɔ̀ʔ	'cough' pl

5.2.1.5. . Gender 9/10.

This gender consists of animate and miscellaneous nouns.

- Animate nouns

Ex. 51.

1	ḿ-bélé	'caterpillar'	əsə́-ḿ-bélé	'caterpillars'
2	ŋ̀-gɔ̀in	'girl'	əsə́-ŋ̀-gɔ̀in	'girls'
3	ŋ̀-gwàʔ	'seed'	əsə́-ŋ̀-gwàʔ	'seeds'

- Miscellaneous nouns.

Ex. 52

1	m̀-mùl	'swelling'	əsə́-m̀-mùl	'swellings'
2	ǹ-dùm	'vagina'	əsə́-ǹ-dùm	'vaginas'
3	ŋ̀-gaîn	'proverb'	əsə́-ŋ̀-gaîn	'proverbs'
5	ŋ̀-gàm	'week'	əsə́-ŋ-gàm	'weeks'
6	ŋ̀-géʔ	'trouble'	əsə́-ŋ́-gé	'roubles'
7	n̄-dɔ́ŋ	'horn'	əsə́-n̄-dɔ́ŋ	'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	í-pə̂ŋ	'jaw'	ətə́-pə̂ŋ	'jaws'
2	í-tə́m	'heart'	ətə́-tə́m	'hearts'
3	í-dwɔ̀	'stomach'	ətə́-dwɔ̀	'stomachs'
4	í-tîŋ	'penis'	ətə́-tîŋ	'penises'

-Plants related nouns

Ex. 54.

1	í-fú	'leaf'	ə́tə́-fú	'leaves'
2	í-pí	'kolanut'	ə́tə́-pí	'kolanuts'
3	í-tʃó	'palm frond'	ə́tə́-tʃó	'palm fronds'

- Abstract nouns.

Ex. 55.

1	í-tɔ́f	'intelligence'	ə́tə́-tɔ́f	'intelligence pl.
2	í-záf	'illness'	ə́tə́-zaf	'illnesses'
3	í-fɔ́m	'brain'	ə́tə́-fɔ́m	'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	ə́fə́-támú?	'cat'	ḿ-támú?	'cats'
2	ə́fə́-nêŋ	'bird'	ḿ-nêŋ	'birds'
3	ə́fə́-pú?	'chimpanzee'	ḿ-pú?	'chimpanzees'
4	ə́fə́-ɣaŋkɔ́?	'chameleon'	ḿ-ɣaŋkɔ́?	'chameleons'
5	ə́fə́-kù	'rabbit'	ḿ-kù	'rabbits'

- Plant related nouns.

Ex. 57.

1	ə́fə́-kâ	'tree'	ḿ-kâ	'trees'
2	ə́fə́-tám	'fruit'	ḿ-tám	'fruits'
3	ə́fə́-və́	'mortar'	ḿ-və́	'mortars'
4	ə́fə́-zə́s	'pepper'	ḿ-zə́s	'pepper' pl.

- Miscellaneous.

Ex. 58.

1	ə́fə́-kwə́s	'pimple'	ḿ-kwə́s	'pimples'
2	ə́fə́-kè?lə̀	'button'	m̀-kè?lə̀	'buttons'
3	ə́fə́-tʃítʃí	'hail stone'	ḿ-tʃítʃí	'hail stones'
4	ə́fə́-tú?	'day'	ḿ-tú?	'days'
5	ə́fə́-pù	'chisel'	m̀-pù	'chisels'
6	ə́fə́-ʒə̀	'god'	m̀-ʒə̀	'gods'
7	ə́fə́- yèlə́	'earring	m̀-yèlə́	'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-sáŋnê	'happiness'
2	í-tsɔ́f	'beauty'
3	í-ʒâ	'madness'
4	í-tʃɔ́ŋ	'theft'

- Mass Nouns.

Ex. 60.

1	í-wúl	'rain'
2	í-wê	'grass'

- Countable nouns

Ex. 61.

1	í-ʒô	'quarrel(s)'
2	í-ʃí	'eye(s)'

5.2.2.2. Gender 6a.

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

- Liquid nouns.

Ex. 62.

1	ḿ-dzîŋ	'urine'
2	ḿ-dʒm	'blood'
3	ḿ-dzâŋ	'castor oil'
4	ḿ-yîŋ	'breast-milk'
5	ḿ-tsɔ́l	'pus'

- Non-liquid nouns

Ex. 63.

1	ḿ-tʃí	'soil'
2	ḿ-kaîn	'gun-powder'
3	m̀-kàŋ	'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 wil 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 by 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.

Chapter 6, the conclusion gives the summary of the entire work and at the same time highlights the problems faced in describing the noun class system of Mmen. Where possible suggestions have been made as to how these problems can be resolved. Where no ready solutions were found, these areas were set aside for future research.

6.2. PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

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 /í-/ and the low vowel /á-/ for class 5 and /í-/ and /ə́-/ 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 4 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 grent 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.

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