A Comparative Analysis of Kiswahili and Echijita Noun Classes

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Abstract: Kiswahili and Echijita are both Bantu languages spoken in Tanzania. Kiswahili is essentially a language of coastal people of East Africa although today it is widely spoken in East and Central Africa. Echijita on the other hand is a language spoken by the Jita who leave in Mara region of Tanzania along the eastern shores of lake Victoria in what is called Musoma rural. The lexical items of these languages are cognates, that is they are derived from the same origin. With the passage of time, each has developed differently, either by acquiring new features specific to itself or losing some linguistic features which they had initially shared. This difference is remarkable in their lexical items. Syntactically both languages have remained the same. Kiswahili and Echijita as Bantu languages exhibit grammatical characteristic which is shared by all Bantu languages, namely the extensive use of prefixes *in nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and demonstratives. Each noun belongs to a class, and each language may have about ten classes all together. Because the objective of our paper was to compare the noun classes of these two languages, we examined the morphology and morpho-syntax of both languages in order to collect data for our discussion. An examination of the morphology of the languages, provided us with nouns which were categorized into different noun classes. Morpho-syntactic information gave us syntactic relations of the nouns and other lexical categories in a construction namely their relationship with the adjectives or locatives and verbs through concordial agreements. Suffice to say that in all Bantu languages a noun that appears as a subject in a construction controls all elements in the sentence which are syntactically related to it through prefixes attached to them as concords. An examination of the nouns of these languages reveals the following characteristics: (i) Every noun belongs to a class. (ii) The class is indicated by a prefix on the noun. (iv) Plural is indicated by a change of prefix of a singular noun. The singular or plural prefix of a noun is a class marker for that noun, hence singular and plural forms constitute different noun classes. (v) A noun class marker is always attached to an adjective or locative where they all appear in a construction. (vi) The verb in a construction has a pronominal prefix which represents the subject in the verb. The pronominal prefix is sometimes referred to as subject prefix. Although both languages have the above morphological features, Echijita has affixes attached to the nominal prefixes of the nouns commonly known as pre-prefixes. Kiswahili does not have the pre-prefix feature. With an exception of the kinship terms which both languages have zero prefix for such nouns, Echijita has prefixes for all other noun classes while Kiswahili has zero prefixes in noun classes 9 and 10 as well. Both languages share common features for NC1 - NC 10 except that in some prefixes, the*

two languages exhibit different forms of the same item. For example NC2 is wa- in Kiswahili but bha-in Echijita. The same for ki- and chi-, vi- and bhi-, u- and lu- Whereas NC 15 is essentially a class of infinitives in both languages Echijita includes also body parts such as –o-ku-bhoko (hand) and o-ku-gu (leg). Since pre-prefix is a feature in both nouns and verbs in Echijita, this feature is also found in Echijita infinitives, e.g. o-ku-bhooja – ku-okota 'picking'; o-ku-bhúsya –ku-uliza 'asking'. One remarkable feature which distinguishes the two languages is the absence of NC12/13 in Kiswahili which is vividly observable in Echijita. This is a dimunitive prefix found in many Bantu languages. Kiswahili uses NC7/8 prefixes to express diminutive sense. Semantically NC1 and NC2 in Kiswahili constitute nouns denoting animates (humans inclusive) because all the nouns share same concords although the kinship terms lack the NC prefix. Echijita has similar feature for NC1 nouns but has NC2 prefix for its kinship terms. Moreover Echijita has NC 9 and NC10 predominantly class for animates excluding humans.

INTRODUCTION

Kiswahili and Echijita are Bantu languages spoken in Tanzania. Kiswahili is a member of the Sabaki subgroup of Northeast Coast Bantu. Kiswahili is spoken as a first language along the East African coast but spoken as a second or third language by many East and Central Africans. Echijita is a Bantu language spoken by the Jita who live on the shores of Lake Victoria in northern Tanzania. It belongs to the Haya-Jita group of the Narrow Bantu.

Bantu languages are a group of African languages forming a subdivision of the Benue-Niger division of the Niger-Congo branch of the Niger-Kordofanian language family. Bantu languages are closely related and have a fairly similar grammar and a substantial sharing of root words.

The most prominent grammatical characteristic of Bantu languages is the extensive use of prefixes. Each noun belongs to a class, and each class is indicated by a prefix on the noun, as well as on adjectives and verbs agreeing with it. Plural is indicated by a change of prefix. The class prefix of a noun is attached to an adjective in a sentence that is connected with the noun grammatically.

The objective of this paper is to describe and compare the noun classes of the two languages in order to find out areas where the NC systems of the two languages converge and where they differ. In this discussion we shall first define what noun class is, point out some features of Bantu noun classes by making reference to some Bantu languages. Then we shall look at the noun classes of the languages under study pointing out the main features of every class and then compare the classes of each language. Finally we shall make some generalizations derived from the comparisons.

WHAT IS A NOUN CLASS SYSTEM?

A noun class system is a system of dividing nouns into grammatically distinct groups each with similar characteristics. Kiswahili and Echijita are Bantu languages which exhibit noun classes which are typical of Bantu languages. Bantu noun

classes are distinguished by a prefix of a noun or by agreement affixes on noun phrase constituents and on the verb. Bantu noun class systems have the following characteristics: (i) they consist of a set of classes into which all nouns in the language are divided. (ii) A class may be marked on the noun itself, but will always be marked on other constituents in the noun phrase or in the sentence to show agreement with the noun. In essence this means that noun classes in Bantu languages are defined by the prefix of the noun as well as by the agreement markers affixed to possessive pronouns, demonstratives and verb stems.It is on this basis that classification of nouns in Bantu languages have been based, either on the morphology of the noun in which case the nominal prefix was identified as the class marker, or on the syntactical realization of a noun. In the latter case pronominal prefix was seen as the class marker. In this paper we shall use the morphological criterion as the basis for determining noun classes but use the syntactic features when necessary to show how nouns of a class agree with other constituents in a sentence and also show nouns which fit in a certain noun class although morphologically are different.

According to Meinhof (1906) Bantu languages have a total of 22 noun classes. However studies conducted by other researchers have not found languages with all these classes. Maho (2003) notes that most Bantu languages exhibit 15 or 16 classes, while a few have more than 20. Studies conducted on Kinyamwezi by Maganga and Shadeberg (1992), (see Table 1), and Sisumbwa by Kahigi (2003) (see Table 3) have revealed 18 noun classes each. Nevertheless it is agreed that all languages share at least ten of these noun classes.

Maganga and Shadebergøs noun classes of Kinyamwezi exhibit 18 noun classes as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Kinyamwezi Noun Class

Class	Class Prefix	Class	Class Prefix
1	mu-	2	ßa-
3	mu-	4	mi-
5	i-	6	ma-
7	ku-	8	shi-
9	N-	10	N-
11	lu-		
12	ka-	13	tu-
14	ßu-		
15	ku-		
16	ha-		
17	ku		
18	mu-		

Hadebergøs classification like that of Kahigi exhibit typical Bantu nouns in NC 12 and NC 13 which have disappeared in other Bantu languages like Kiswahili. This means that whereas Kinyamwezi still retains the diminutive class marker /ka/ and

/tu-/ in singular and plural respectively, Kiswahili does not have them any more. The diminutive sense in Kiswahili is expressed by the NC 7 and NC8 class markers /ki-/ and /vi-/. Moreover the semi vowel /ß/ in Kinyamwezi is also a characteristic of the Bantu forms which is manifested in many Bantu languages, Sisumbwa inclusive except Kiswahili which has adopted /w/.

Giriama is a Bantu language of Kenya coast which belongs to the Sabaki group like Swahili. Giriama which is one of the languages of Mijikenda group of languages has 18 Noun Classes as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Giriama Noun Class

Class	Class Prefix		Class	Class Prefix	
1	mu-	mu-tu (person)	2	wa-	wa-tu (persons)
3	mu-	mu-hi (tree)	4	mi-	mi-hi (trees)
5	dzi-	dzi-tso (eye)	6	ma-	ma-tso (eyes)
7	ki-	ki-hi (chair)	8	vi-	vi-hi (chairs)
9	N-	Nyumba (house)	10	N-	Nyumba (houses)
11	lu-	lu-zi (thread)			
12	ka-	ka-soza (small bone)	13	u-	.u-soza (small bones)
14	n-	n-yuzi (threads)			
15	ku-	ku-tseka (laughing)			
16	ha-	ha-ha (here)			
17	ku	ku-ku (these sides)			
18	mu-	mu-mu (in here)			

Sisumbwa is a language spoken in western Tanzania and bears many features similar to Kisukuma and Kinyamwezi. Acording to Kahigi Sisumbwa has 18 noun classes as shown in Table 3. Kahigiøs classification includes kinship terms which form a sub NC 2 classified as NC2a as it has a long vowel forming the NC2 class marker/ ßa:/. Both ßa- and ßaá belong to NC2. This feature seems to be specific to this language because it does not feature in sister languages like Kinyamwezi.

Table 3: Kahigi's Noun Classification of Sisumbwa

Class	Class Prefix	Class	Class Prefix
1 1a	mu-	2 2a	ßa- ßaá
3	mu-	4	mi-
5	li-	6	ma-
7	si-	8	ßi-
9	N-	10	N-
11	lu-		
12	ka-	13	tu-
14	ßu-		
15	ku-		
16	ha-		
17	ku		
18	mu-		

The noun classes of the above three languages (Kinyamwezi, Sisumbwa and Giriama) show some typical Bantu NC which cut across many Bantu languages. Classes 1-10 are common to all languages. These are pairs of singular and plural prefixes whereby the odd numbers exhibit singular prefixes and the even numbers are the plural prefixes. Now let us examine the noun classes of Kiswahili and Echijita.

Kiswahili and Echijitahave a noun class system that is typical of Bantu languages. In common with all Bantu languages, Kiswahili has 15 noun classes as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Kiswahili noun classes

Noun Class	Nom. pref.	Adj pref.	Dem. pref.	Pron. pref	Semantic features	Example nouns
1	m-/mu-/ mw-	m-/ mu-/ mw-	yu-	yu-/a-	animate class but exclusively humans except for mnyama (animal) or mdudu (insect)	mtoto (child), mtu (person), mwalimu (teacher), mwizi (thief) mnyama (animal), mdudu (insect)
2	wa-	wa-	.wa-	wa-	as above	as above
3	m-	m-	u-	u-	Inanimate class: It includes mainly names of: 1) *plants and trees*, 2) *nature*: moto (fire), 3) *some body parts*: moyo (heart), 4) *deverbal nouns* 5) *other uncategorized nouns*	mti (tree), mwembe (mango tree), moto ó mioto (fire (s), mto - mito(river(s) moyo (heart) mdomo (mouth), mkono (hand), mgongo (back) mtego <tega (trap), msimamo < simama (stand), mfuko (pocket), mshahara (salary), mwaka (year), mwezi (month)
			yu-	yu-/a-	*6) humans*	mtume (prophet)
4	mi-	. mi- .	i- .	i- .	as above	plurals of all the nouns NC 3 shown above
		wa-	wa-	wa-		This applies to human noun ̠mitumeø
5	ji-/ Ø-	Ø-/ji-	.li-	li-	Inanimates and animates 1) *some body parts* 2) *some tree parts* 3) au*gumenta-*	jicho (eye), sikio (ear), jino (tooth) tunda (fruit), tawi (branch), jani (leaf), ua (flower)

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		.m-	.yu-	.yu-/a-	*tives* 4) *human activities* 5) *loan words* : *humans objects*	jiti (big tree), jumba (big house), joka (big snake) pigo < piga (beating), jambo < amba (issue) seremala (carpenter), fundi (aartisan) shangazi (aunt), gari (car), shuka (bed sheet)
6	ma-	.ma-	.ya-	ya-	1. as above 2. *mass nouns* 3. *concrete and abstract* 4. *nouns denoting genarality* 5. *deverbal nouns*	as above majivu (ash) and all liquids such as maji (water), mate (saliva), maendeleo (development), maafikiano (agreement) etc. majirani (neighbours), mazingira (enviroment), maasi (rebellion) maisha < ishi (life), mashindano < shindana (competition); magari, mashuka; maseremala, (carpenters) mafundi (artisans)
		.wa-	.wa-	.wa-	6. loan words	marafiki (friends)
7	ki-	ki-	ki-	ki-	1. objects of everyday use. 2. diminutives. 3. humans with impairments 4. part of human body 5. deverbal nouns 6. languages	kiti (chair), kitu (thing), kijiti (stick), kisu (knife), kitoto(small child), kijumba (small house) kiziwi (deaf person), kipofu (blind person), kidole (finger), kiuno (waist), kiganja (palm), kifuniko <funika (lid), kizibo < ziba (stopper); Kiswahili, Kiingereza, Kifaransa
8	vi-	vi-	vi-	vi-	as above	as above except for languages.
9	N-	n-/ Ø- m-	i- yu-	i- a-	1. *loan words of objects, nature, abstracts,*	shule (school), redio (radio), meza (table), baridi (cold), bahari (sea), hasira (anger), furaha (happiness), pilipili

					food	(pepper), hasara (loss),
					2. Bantu words beginning with nasals /n/,,/m/./ / , /	umba (house), ama (meat), ombe (cow), njia (path) nta (wax),
						simba (lion), mvua (rain) tembo(elephant), kuku (hen), tai (eagle), njiwa (dove), mchwa (ant), nyuki (bee); nyigu (wasp),askari, baba, babu, kaka, dada, mama
					3. animates, -animals -birds -insects 4. humans	
10	N-	n-/ Ø-	zi-	zi-	as above since nouns of this class have same form as those of class 9. The only exception which differentiates it from the former is the pronominal prefix 2. plurals of nouns beginning with u-	as above (ubao-) mbao, (ulimi) ndimi, (ukuta) kuta, uso (nyuso)
11	u-*	u-	u-	u-	words of objects which begin with u- and have plurals in class 10.	ungo, ubao, uzi, ulimi, ukuni, ukuta, uso, ufagio
12	ka-**			ka-	-	-
13	tu-**			tu-	-	-
14	u-	u-	u-	u-	abstract nouns derived from : a) adjectives b) nouns names of countries concrete object	uchafu(dirtiness), ubaya (maliciousness), uhuru (freedom), urefu (length). ujana (youth), uchawi (witchcraft), ufalme (kingdom). Ujerumani (Geramny), Ufaransa (France). wali (cooked rice)
15	ku-	.ku-		ku-	substantivated verbs whose main feature is the infinitive ku-	kucheza (playing), kuimba (singing), kusoma (reading), kutembea (walking)
16 17 18	mahali			pa- ku- mu-	These are locative nouns which signify location/ place.	mahali *pa*le pana watu pale shambani pamekimwa (In the farm it has been cultivated) mahali *kul*e hakujulikani(that place is

					(*mahali*).	unknown) mahali hu*mu* mna watu kweli? (Are people really inside there?)
					These include also those nouns formed by suffixing ó**ni** to any noun e.g. meza > mezani (table > on the table), nyumba > nyumbani (house > home) etc. : .pa- agreement indicates specific or definite place ku- agreement indicates a general area or indefinite place mu-agreement indicates inside-ness	Shamba*ni* kuna viazi (There are potatoes in the farm) Shimo*ni* mna nyoka mkubwa (There is a big snake inside the hole)

* This prefix is merged with class prefix 14.
** These prefixes are no longer in current Kiswahili

Looking at classes 1 and 2 whose nominal prefixes are *mu-* and *wa-* respectively, we see that all nouns which refer to human beings and begin with *mu-* and *wa-* singular and plural respectively, belong to these classes except for *mnyama – wanyama* (animal(s)) and *mdudu – wadudu* (insects).

Even some nouns with different nominal prefixes find a place in these classes because they share the same pronominal prefix of the *mu-/ wa-* classes since such nouns refer to humans as well, as shown in E1 below:

E1. NC 3/ 4 *mu-/mi-*: *m*tume ó *mi*tume (prophet/prophets)
5/ 6 fundi ó *ma*fundi (artisan(s), dereva - *ma*dereva (driver(s), daktari ó *ma*daktari (doctor(s), dalali ó*ma*dalali (broker(s).
7/ 8 ki-/vi- : *ki*wete ó *vi*wete (cripple(s), *ki*ongozi ó *vi*ongozi (leader(s), *ki*jana ó *vi*jana (youth(s), *ki*barua ó *vi*barua (casual labourer(s).
9/ 10 n-/n-   bubu (dump(s), baba (father(s), mama (mother(s).

Moreover all other nouns which refer to animates such as animals, birds, insects i.e. all other living beings of the animal kingdom, take the class 1/ 2 pronominal prefixes irrespective of their nominal prefix which is mostly a zero prefix since morphologically almost all words for animals, birds and insects fall under the 9/ 10 class. This means that from a morphological point of view some Kiswahili nouns which refer to humans but do not take the nominal class marker do not belong to classes 1 and 2 but to the classes to which they bear the relevant nominal class marker. See E1 above. The same applies to nouns which refer to animates in general and have zero prefix. They all fall under classes 9 and 10. See table 4 above.

Looked from a syntactical perspective one would say nouns which refer to living creatures of the animal kingdom belong to one class hence the animal class which would mean classes 1 and 2.

Further examination of the Kiswahili noun classes reveals the following morphological characteristics: (1) NC1 and NC3 have homonymous nominal prefixes but differ in their pronominal prefixes as well as their semantic features. Suffices to say here that the main semantic feature for NC1 is humans while NC 3 is mainly inanimate. (2) Some elements in NC5, and all nouns in NC9 and NC10 have zero nominal prefix. However each exhibit different pronominal prefixes. (3) NC11 and NC14 have homonymous nominal and pronominal prefixes but different semantic features. NC14 are abstract nouns while NC11 refer to concrete objects whose plural forms fall under NC10. Interestingly however is the inclusion of names of countries under NC11. Although a country's name bears the class marker, this is not repeated in the class concords. Here it is the concord of *nchi* (country) which belongs to NC10 that is manifested. For example:

> E2 (a) Uingereza ilikuwa na dola kubwa
> England had a big empire
> (b) Marekani ilipata Uhuru miaka 200 iliyopita
> USA became independent 200 years ago
> (c) Nchi ya Uingereza ilikuwa na dola kubwa
> (The country of)England had a big empire
> (d) Nchi ya Marekani ilipata uhuru miaka 200 iliyopita
> (The country of)USA became independent 200 years ago

Although Uingereza carries the NC11 class prefix its concord is the same as that of Marekani that bears no NC11 class prefix as shown in E2 a) and b) above. On the other hand E2 (c) and (d) whose headword is *nchi* reveal the same concord as that of E2 a) which means that names of countries with NC11 prefix are placed in two classes: a surface NC which is class 11 to which it bears the nominal prefix, and an underlying NC which is class 10 (the class of nchi) to which it bears the pronominal prefix. The homonymy of nominal and pronominal prefixes of NC11 and NC14 necessitated the merger of the two classes. (4) Pronominal prefixes of 15 and 17 are also homonymous.

Echijita has 18 noun classes. It has almost the same classes like other Bantu languages such as Kinyamwezi and Sisumbwa .

Table 5: Echijita Noun classes

CLASSIFICATION OF ECHIJITA NOUNS
An examinaton of Echijita nouns shows that the language has 19 noun classes as shown in the following chart:

Table 5: Echijita Noun classes

Noun Class	Nom. Pref.	Adj. Pref.	Dem. prefix	Pron. pref.	Semantic features	Example Nouns
1	mu- /mw-	mu-	u-	a-	humans,	o-mu-nu =personø o-mu-yali =heroø o-mu-lume =manø o-mu-soko =enemyø
1a	Ø-	mu-	u-	a-	kinship terms	sája =grandfatherø láta =fatherø káka grandmother omáyi mother
					deverbatives	chatanda =first bornø o-mu-limi a-bhalimi o-muluwani fightreøø
					animals	wakulu =tortioseø walubhubhi =spiderø walukelwe =frogø wamaanga =foreignerø wamatwi =deaf personø
2	bha-	bha-	bha-	bha-	as above	a-bha-nu =peopleø a-bha-yali =heroesø a-bha-lume =menø a-bha-soko =enemiesø a-bha-saja ó =grandfathersø a-bha-lata ó =fathersø a-bha-kaka ó =grandmothersø bha-wakulu =tortisesø bha-walubhubhi =spiders, bha-walukelwe =frogsø, bha-wamaanga =foreignersø, bha-wamatwi =deaf personsø
3	mu- /mw-	mu- /mw-	gu-	gu- /gw-	objects/tools animal body parts food nature miscelleneous	o-mu-ose =flywhiskø o-mu-jinga =beehiveø o-mu-limu =workø o-mu-lyango =doorø o-mu-nwa =mouthø
4	mi-	mi-	ji-	ji-	as above	e-mi-ose =flywhisksø e-mi-jinga =beehivesø e-mi-limu=worksø emilyango =doorsø e-mi-nwa =mouthsø
5	li-	li-	li-	li-	plants/trees body parts animals insects loanwords	li-ti =treeø li-ijo =groupø li-libhwa =cassavaø li-kula =age setø li-iwa =boneø li-bhele =breastø li-bhakuli =bowelø
6	ma-	ma-	ga-	ga-	as above mass liquids/fluids	a-ma-ti =treesø a-ma-ijo =groupsø a-ma-libhwa =cassavaø a-ma-kula =age setsø

						a-ma-iwa =bonesø
						a-ma-bhele =breastsø
						a-ma-bhakuli =bowelsø
						a-manji =waterø
						a-manyinga =bloodø
						a-ma-fwefu =salivaø
7	chi-	chi-	chi-	chi-	things/objects body parts insects deverbatives others uncountable	e-chi-lato =shoeø e-chi-tabho =bookø e-chi-jiko =spoonø e-ch-ala =fingerø e-chi-seko =laughterø e-chi-sibho , stopperø e-chai =teaø
8	bhi-	bhi-	bhi-	bhi-	things/objects body parts insects deverbatives	e-bhi-lato =shoesø e-bhi-tabho =booksø e-bhi-jiko =spoonsø e-bhy-ala =fingersø e-bhi-seko =laughtersø e-bhi-sibho =stoppersø
9	i-	Ø-	i-	i-	animals birds insects nature body parts others loanwords	i-ngøa =cowø i-mbusi =goatø i-mbwa =dogø i-njibha =doveø i-ngøoko =henø i-mbwiga =beeø i-nda =louseø i-ngaji =ladderø i-meja =tableø i-motoka =motorcarø i-naji =coconutø i-namba =numberø
10	ji-	Ø-	ji-	ji-	as above	ji-ngøa =cowsø ji-mbusi =goatsø ji-mbwa =dogsø ji-njibha =dovesø ji-ngøoko =hensø ji-mbwiga =beeø ji-nda =louseø ji-ngaji =ladderø ji-meja =tablesø ji-motoka =motorcarsø ji-naji =coconutsø ji-namba =numbersø
11	lu-	lu-	lu-/lw-	lu-/lw-	different categories	o-lu-bhala =areaø o-lu-bhafu =ribø o-lu-bhui =grinding stoneø o-lugoye =rope,ø o-lu-bhibhi =boundary, o-lu-gani =taleø o-lu-fwili =hairø o-lu-gendo =journeyø
12	ka-	ka-	ka-	ka-	diminutive nouns of different categories	a-ka-nu =tiny childø a-kal-ume =tiny bullø a-ka-bhusi =tiny goatø a-ka-bhakuli =tiny bowelø
13	tu-	tu-	tu-/tw-	tu-/tw-	as above	otunu - tiny childrenø

						otulume ó –tiny bullsø otubhusi - tiny goat otubhakuli ó –tiny bowelsø otulume, otulimu, otujinga, otumeja, otugajeti otubhusi, otulibhwa, otubhakuli, otutooke
14	bhu-	bhu-/bhw-	bhu-/bhw-	bhu-/bhw-	abstract/uncount ables concrete/counta bles	o-bhu-bhibhi –badnessø o-bhu-bhiilwa –hateø o-bhu-bhuya –skillø obukoma –bowø o-bhu-lili –bedø obhubhini, (dancing) obhufwefu (pubic hairs), obhugolo (snuff), obhugusi (price),
15	ku-	ku-	ku-/kw-	ku-/kw-	infinitive verbs body parts nature	o-ku-lema –to refuseø o-ku-leta –to bringø o-ku-lapa –to swear o-ku-bhooko –handø o-ku-gu ølegø o-ku-twi, –earø
16	ha-	ha-		ha-	locative specific location	Halya
17	ku-	ku-		ku-	locative general area	Kulya
18	mu-	mu-		mu-	locative insideness	Mulya

Having seen the class prefixes for each noun as well as their pronominal prefixes and semantic features for each class and a few sample nouns, let us now examine every noun class analyizing the morphological and syntactical features for each class.

Noun Classes1/1a and 2
These are nouns which denote human beings and commonly referred to as human classes. Class 1 is marked by the prefix *mu- or mw-* in case a noun has a vowel-initial stem. Class 1 nouns take their plural in class 2 where the plural marker is *bha-*. For example:

E3   Class 1   Class 2
        o-mu-nu   –personø   a-bha-nu   –peopleø
        o-mu-lamu –brother in lawø   a-bha-lamu –brothers in lawø
        o-mu-lume –manø   a-bha-lume –menø
        o-mu-limi   –farmerø   a-bha-limi   –farmersø
        o-mu-luwani –fighterø   a-bha-luwani –fightersø
        o-mw-ende   –loverø   a-bhe-ende   –loversø

Nouns of class 1 /2 include deverbatives which denote humans such as omulimi (farmer), omuluwani < kulwaana (fighter), omwende < kwenda (lover) etc.

Class 1a includes also kinship terms as well as words which denote animals and birds but have zero prefix in singular and yet take the plural prefix *-bha-* which is prefix marker of noun class 2. For example:

> **E4** kinship terms
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | sáaja | -grandfatherø | bha-sáaja | grandfathers |
> | láata | -fatherø | bha-láata | -fathersø |
> | káaka | grandmother | bha-káaka | -grandmothersø |
> | máayi | mother | bha-máayi | -mothersø |

> Animals/ insects
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | wakulu | -tortioseø | bha-wakulu | -tortoisesø |
> | walubhubhwi | -spiderø | bha-walubhubhwi | -spiders, |
> | walukelwe | -frogø | bha-walukelwe | -frogsø |
> | wambwe | -jackalø | bha-wambwe | -jackalsø |

> So the nouns in class 1 and 2 can be categorized in the following groups:
> 1. Underived noun stems : o-mu-nu -personø o-mu-yali -heroø o-mu-lamu -brother in lawø, o-mu-lume -manø, o-mu-soko -enemyø
> 2. Derived verb stems: o-mu-limi < lima -farmer, farmø o-mu-lwaye < lwala -sick person, fall sickø, o-mw-ende < kwenda -lover, loveø
> 3. Kinship terms: sáaja -grandfatherø, láata -fatherø, káaka -grandmotherømáayi -motherøsengi -auntø
> 4. Exceptions: humans: nyamungugu -miserø, kamalisye -last bornø, wamaanga -foreignerø, wamatwi -deaf personø and chatanda -first bornø, and animals: wakulu -tortioseøwalubhubhi -spiderø walukelwe -frogø

Category 3 and 4 are exceptional because nouns in these categories lack nominal prefix in NC 1, but take the plural prefix for that class which forms noun class 2. The syntactical realization of the agreeing elements of the nouns of this class is manifested in the following constructions:

> **E5** O-mu-nu u-nu ni mu-leela
>   Pre-NC1-person con-this-is con-tall
>   This person is tall

The constituent elements of this construction are the pre-prefix **o-** that is always attached to CL1 nouns that is followed by noun class marker **mu-** which is also the nominal prefix of this class. This is then followed by the nominal root *ónu* (that

forms the stem *munu* of the noun). Because a noun that functions as an actant in a sentence controls all other constituents both in the noun phrase and in the whole construction, we see here how it triggers the concords **u-**in the demonstrative ónu (unu) (this) and **mu-** in the adjective ólela (tall) which follows the copula *ni* that appears after the demonstrative (unu). The adjective mu-leela completes the construction.

> **E6**   O-*mw*-ana o-*mu*-tooto *a*-mu-bhuma o-*mu*-sani w-a-ye
> Pre-CL1-child-Pre-con-small subj- obj-beat-Pre-CL1-friend-con-poss- his
> ÷small boy beat his friendø

The noun in **E6** belongs to CL1 and thus begins with pre-prefix *o-* that is followed by noun class prefix *mu-* and the nominal root *–ana*. Here we see also the noun class 1 that triggers pre-prefix *o-* and class prefix CL1 *mu-* whch are attached to the adjective *–toto* (small). Similarly noun CL1 triggers the agreement of the subject *a-* in the verb which is a pronominal prefix that is attached to the verb *bhuma* (beat) and the pre-prefix *o-* that is followed by the class marker mu- which is attached to the noun ÷saniø(friend).

> **E7** a) A -bha-limi   bha-satu bha-bha-gwata a-bha-ifi
> Pre-NC2-farmers con-three subj-obj-catch Pre-NC2-thieves
> Three farmers caught thieves
> b) A-bha-na bha-fula ji-ngubho j-ee-bhwe
> Pre-NC2 subj-wash-Pre-ØNC10 clothes-con-poss.their
> Children are washing their clothes.
> c) A-bha-ana bha-bhili bha-nu ni bh-a-ni
> Pre-CL2-children-con-two-con-here-is-con óposs-mine
> These two children are mine

The CL2 nouns in E7 above reveal nominal prefix *bha-* which is also a subject prefix. This is in contrast with CL1 nouns whose pronominal prefix is different from the nominal prefix. Prefix *bha-*is here realized as an adjectival prefix (see bhasatu and bhabhili) in (a) and (c), subject prefix (*bha*-gwata and *bha*-fula) in (a) and (b), in demonstrative marker (*bha*-nu) and a possessive agreement (*bha*-ani) in (c).

In Echijita animals are usually placed in CL9 and CL10. However there are some exceptions. For examples   walukelwe ÷frogø wakulu ÷tortoiseø wambwe ÷jackalø and the insect walubhubhi ÷spiderøtake the concords of CL1 nouns although they do not reveal the nominal prefix. The plural forms of these nouns have the nominal prefix of CL2 and all its concords.

> **E8** a) Walukelwe u-nu a-fuuye
> Frog - con-this ósubj- dead
> b) Bha-lukelwe bha-nu bha-fuuye
> CL2-frog-con-these-subj-dead

Noun Classes 3 / 4

Noun Class 3 are nouns which denote parts of human body (human parts), e.g. omunwa 'mouth', omukundi 'navel', omulusi 'shin', omutwe 'head', omwongo 'nose', omwoyo 'heart', part of animal body, e.g. omukia 'tail', omulisi 'dewlap', omutima 'heart of dead animal', omwimo 'tusk', foods such as omukate 'bread', omuchele 'rice', omusosi 'gravy', things or tools or instruments e.g. omulyango 'door', omusimu 'arrow', omutana 'quiver', omutao 'ladle', omwiko 'wooden spoon', omusipi 'belt', natural phenomena such as omuyaga 'wind', omulilo 'fire', omwalo 'lake' and other miscellaneous nouns such as omulago 'promise', omukwéési 'menstruation', omulimu 'work', omusanga 'news' etc.

All these nouns start with prefix *mu-* and their plurals form class 4 nouns that begin with prefix *mi-*.

E9 Class 3   Class 4

o-mu-yaga	'wind'	e-mi-yaga	'winds'
o-mu-ose	'flywhisk'	e-mi-ose	flywhisks'
o-mu-jinga	'beehive'	e-mi-jinga	'beehives'
o-mu-limu	'work'	e-mi-limu	'works'
o-mu-lyango	'door'	e-mi-lyango	'doors'
o-mu-nwa	'mouth'	e-mi-nwa	'mouths'
o-*mw*-alo	'lake shore'	e-*mi*-alo	'lake shores'

An examination of nouns of CL3 and CL4 in a construction we see the concords in agreement with the nominal prefix of the noun classes as in E11 below:

E10 a) O-*mu*-simu *gu*-nu *gu*-bhulile

Pre-CL3-arrow-con-this ósubj-lost

This arrow was lost

b) E-*mi*-simu *ji*-nu *ji*-bhulile

Pre-CL4-arrows-con-these-subj-lost

These arrows were lost

c) O-mu-lyango gu-nu ni mu-tooto

Pre-CL3-door-con-this-is-con-small

This door is small

d) E-mi-lyango ji-nu ni mi-tooto

Pre-CL4-door-con-these is ócon-small

These doors are small

The CL3 nominal prefix *mu-* in *o-mu-simu* and *o-mu-lyango* takes the pronominal prefix *gu-* which is also the agreeing element of the demonstrative ó*nu* in a) and c). The CL3 nominal prefix in c) agrees also with the adjective ó*tooto*. The same applies to CL4 nouns in b) and d) above. The nominal prefix *mi-* is represented in the adjective -*tooto* ind) while the pronominal *ji-* in b) is also an agreeing element of the demonstrative ó*nu* in b) and d).

Noun Classes 5 /6

Class 5 has nouns which start with prefix *li-* while class 6 includes nouns with prefix *ma-* For example:

E11 Class 5		Class 6	
li-gi	'egg'	a-ma-gi	'eggs'
li-ti	'tree'	a-ma-ti	'trees'
li-iwa	'bone'	a-ma-iwa	'bones'
li-bhele	'breast'	a-ma-bhele	'breasts'
li-bhakuli	'bowel'	a-ma-bhakuli	'bowels'
li-bhaajwa	'thigh'	a-ma-bhajwa	'thighs'

This class constitutes of names of a wide range of things, animals, plants, insects and many others. For example: plants/trees, liti 'tree', lilibhwa 'cassava', libhingo 'elephant grass', body part (of human or animal) libhele 'breast', libhajwa 'thigh', libhega 'shoulder', libhondo 'adam's aple', objects such as libhui 'stone', liilo 'sickle', libhubhujilo 'bellows', animals e.g. libhutuku 'rock lizard', lidume 'old bull', lifukusi 'mole', insects such as lidudu 'insects', libhugu 'tsetsefly', libhééja 'maggot' etc. This class has a good number of loan words (directly borrowed from Kiswahili): libhulangeti 'blanket', lichéénza 'mandarin', libhakuli 'bakuli', libhofulo 'loaf of bread', likalatasi 'paper', likanisa 'church', liduka 'shop', likatani 'sisal fibre' etc. All these nouns have one feature in common i.e. they take the prefix *li-* in their singular forms or prefix *ma-* in plural.

Whereas nouns of class 6 are the plural forms of class 5, some nouns fall under class 6 only as they do not have singular forms. Usually nouns of this category are mass nouns such as those denoting liquids, e.g. oil, saliva, water, blood etc, solid uncountable things such as mud, dregs or hair and abstract things like strength. For example:

E12			
a-ma-bhaji	'medicine'	a-ma-chicha	'dregs'
a-ma-chwaata	'saliva'	a-ma-naga	'strength'
a-ma-fwi	'excrement'	a-ma-koloolo	'phlegm'
a-ma-nji	'water'	a-ma-nyiinga	'blood'
a-ma-nyaku	'bee-wax'	a-ma-pande	'soft rice porridge'
a-ma-nu	'rubbish'	a-ma-futa	'oil'
a-ma-kamba	'fur'	a-ma-mila	'nosal mucus'

The nominal prefixes *li-* and *ma-* of Class 5 and 6 nouns take agreements *li-* and *ga-* respectively as subject prefixes, possessive or demonstrative class markers as we see in E13 below. However nominal prefix *li-* appears also as adjectival prefix as in *li-*yaya, *li-*totoand in *li-*lela in a), b) and c) while class prefix *ma-* appears also as an adjectival prefix. See *ma-*lele in d).

> **E13.** a) *Li-*bhakuli *li-*yaya *li-*gulilwe
> CL5-bowel-con-new-subj-be bought
> A new bowel has been bought
> b) *Li-*senga *li-*nu *li-*tooto *li-*juye ji-mbwiiga
> CL5 óbeehive-con-this ócon-small ósubj-be full-CL10-bees
> This small beehive is full of bees

       c) *Li*-ti *li*-nu ni *li*-leela
         NC5-tree-con-this is con-tall
         This tree is tall
      d) *A-ma*-ti *ga*-nu ni *ma*-leea
         Pre-NC6-tree-con-these are con-tall
         These trees are tall

Noun Class 7/ and 8
Classes 7 and 8 are usually regarded as classes of things such as echilato (shoe), echitabho (book), echibhuyu (calabash), echibhuukilo (comb), echijiko (spoon) echijuungu (pot), echikiko ±tobacco pipeø echikapo (basket) etc. In addition to things, this class includes also nouns denoting (a) humans such as echikooja (ill omened child), echatanda ±first bornø (b) insects such as echifunyo±caterpillarø echifwi ±waspø(c) parts of human body such as echibhunu ±waistø echala ±fingerø echigaanja ±palm (of hand),echifubha ±chestø (d) deverbative nouns, e.g. echiloto±dreamø echiseko±laughterø echisibho ±stopperø and (e) miscellaneous nouns such as echiimo ±curseø echiinu, ÷vesselø echibhalikisio ±signø There are also uncountable nouns in this class which fall under class 7 only since they do not have plurals, example: echaata ±heartburnø echai ±teaø or echalamo ±mourningø echingeleja ±English languageø

Nouns of class 7 begin with prefix *chi-* while their plural forms i.e. class 8 start with prefix *bhi-*. For example:

    E14   Class 7   Class 8

Class 7		Class 8	
e-ch-aala	±fingerø	e-bhy-ala	÷ fingersø
e-ch-alo	±landø	e-bhy-alo	±landsø
e-ch-ambuko	±crossing placeø	e-bhy-ambukoø	
e-ch-ana che liso	±pupil of the eyeø	e-bhy-ana	±pupils of the eyesø
e-ch-angala	±grain earø	e-bhy-angala	±grain earsø
e-chi-ima	±mountain/hillø	e-bhi-ima	±mountainsø
e-chi-imo	±curseø	e-bhi-imo	±cursesø
e-chi-inu	÷vesselø	e-bhi-inu	±vesselsø
e-chi-bhalikisio	±signø	e-bhi-bhalikisio	±signsø
e-chi-bhiliti	±matchboxø	e-bhi-bhiliti	±matchboxesø
e-*chi*-bhala	±grasslandø	e-*bhi*-bhala	±grasslandsø
e-*chi*-soonge	±peak/topø	e-bhi-soonge	±peaksø
e-*chi*-kelege	±stony groundø	e-*bhi*-kelege	±stony groundsø
e-*chi*-lomoko	±steep areaø	e-*bhyo* lomoko	±steep areasø
e-*chi*-unyu	±salty areaø	e-*bhy*-unyu	±salty areasø

The nominal prefixes and concordial agreements for the CL7 and CL8 nouns are homonymous. They are *chi-* for CL7 and *bhi-* for CL8. The agreements can appear with all constituents in a construction namely, adjectives, demonstratives, possessives or as subject prefixes as in E15.

E15 a) *E-ch-*aala *ch-*ao *chi-*tooto *chi-*fwimbile
Pre-CL7-finger-con-poss-con-small-subj-swelled
Your small finger has swelled
 b) *E-chi-*salu *chi-*nu ni *chi-*tooto
Pre-CL7-bead-con-this-is-con-small
This bead is small
c) E-bhi-salu bhi-nu ni bhi-toto
Pre-CL8 beads-con-these-are-con-small
These beads are small
 d) E-chi-tebhe chi-nu ni chi-tooto
Pre-CL7-chair-con-this-is-con-small
This chair is small
 e) E-bhi-tebhe bhi-nu ni bhi-toto
Pre-CL8-chairs-con-these-are-con-small
These chairs are small

Noun Class 9/10

Class 9 and 10 are basically classes of animals, birds, insects, parts of human body, plants and loan words. Unlike similar classes in other Bantu languages Kiswahili inclusive, class 9/10 in Echijita does not have the N-N class feature. Nouns in these classes have singular and plural forms which are represented by prefix *i-* and *ji-* respectively. This is in contrast with other Bantu languages where one form is used both in singular and plural with the pronominal prefixes marking the difference. However the Echijita noun class 9/10 share other features that are common in other Bantu languages, namely it retains the pronominal prefixes i- /zi- for class 9 and 10 respectively although in this language /z/ is realized as /j/ since it lacks this character in the language's phonology. This explains why the Kiswahili word *gazeti* (newspaper) is adopted in Echijita as *liga**j**eti*, nazi (coconut) is adopted as na**ji** and *Kiingereza* (English language) was adopted as *Kingele**j**a.*

E16	Class 9		Class 10	
	i-mbusi ‗goat‗	ji-mbusi	‗goats‗
	i-mbwa ‗dog‗	ji-mbwa	‗dogs‗
	i- ‗bitch‗	ji-mbwagasi	‗bitches‗
	i-mbwiga‗bee‗	ji-mbwiga	‗bees‗

Nouns denoting animals include *inembe* (hyena) *isikili* or *ipunda* (donkey), *isana* (canerat),*isabhi* (rhinoceros), *isabhu* (porcupine), *injofu* (elephant), nouns for birds are *ipungu* (African harrier/eagle), *inyoni* (bird), *imbata* (duck), insects include *inge* (scorpion), *imbungi* (jigger), *ifunafu* (red ants), parts of human body *ingoengoe* (eyebrow), *ing'okola* (knee), *ifigo* (kidney), loanwords are *ibhasikeli* (bicycle), *ibucha* (butcher), *igilasi* (glass), *isadaka* (sacrifice).*imotoka* (motorcar).

 It is interesting to note here that borrowings in Echijita was done through Kiswahili. This means that it borrowed foreign words which had entered Kiswahili from other languages even where Echijita had a word of its own which could be used. For example, in Kiswahili bicycle was adopted as *baisikeli* and Echijita adopted the Swahili form as *ibhasikeli*although the language had *imbiligiti* ‗wooden

bicycleøwith the same denotation. Likewise Echijita preferred ‑ndegeøfor aeroplane as it is in Kiswahili instead of ‑inyoniøwhich also means ‑birdø

This shows that adoption of words was not done only for the sake of filling a lexical gap, but for novelty of the word itself. People did not feel that a wooden bicycle had the same status like a metal bicycle, hence adopted the foreign word to signify the new object/ concept and retained their word for their object although they were similar structurally and functionally. Likewise they adopted *mwalimu* while they had *o-mwi-gisya* for similar sense except that the former represented the modern teacher while the later represented the past.

Looking at the morphology of the nouns of these classes one would be tempted to think that the plural markers in these nouns (i- and ji-) were pre-prefixes and that if were to be ignored, the nouns would have same characteristic like other Bantu languages whereby the forms of the nouns in these classes had no prefixes and the nouns had no singular or plural forms. Moreover the forms almost all begin with a nasal (hence N class) except the loan words. But an examination of the syntactical characteristics of these nouns shows that the plural markers are integral parts of the nouns as they have influence on other constituent parts of a construction as shown on E17 below.

> E17 a) *I*-meeja *i*-funikile
>   CL9-table-subj-broken
>   A table is broken
>   b) I-*mbusi* i-*nuninooto*
>   CL9-goat-con-this-is-small
>   This goat is small
>   c) Ji-mbusi ji-nu ni nooto
>   CL10-goats-con-these-are-small
>   These goats are small
>   d) I-nyumba i-nu ni nene
>   CL9-house-con-this-is-big
>   This house is big
>   e) Ji-nyumba-ji-nu ni nene
>   CL10-houses-con-these-are-big
>   These houses are big

In all these example sentences we see class prefix i- for noun class 9 and prefix ji- for class 10 are all attached to elements controlled by the nouns as agreements. For example E17 a), b), c) and e) show agreement **i-** of class 9 attached to demonstratives, possessives or to a verb as a subject marker where applicable. The only exception here is that the adjective does not take the nominal prefix i- or ji- and instead takes the underlying n- class marker. For example the adjective ‑tootoø (small) becomes *nooto* and ‑leelaø(long/tall) becomes *ndeela.*

The agreement [i- > y] in an environment where it precedes a vowel as we see in E18a below where the agreement i- is attached to ao and thus changes into y-ao. The same applies to nominal prefix *ji-* which triggered agreements with elements to which it governs in a construction as we see in E18 b.

E 18   a) i-motokaa y-ao i-nyaya i-tegee kwi bhalabhala
         CL9-motorcar-con-your-con-new-subj-stop-on-road
         Your new car stopped on the road
      b) *Ji*-mbafu *ji*-bhili *ji*-nu *ja*-bhutukile
         CL10 ribs-con-two-con-these-subj-broken
         These two ribs were broken

Although Echijita nouns of this class does not exhibit the N class marker it does however show this in the adjectives modifying nouns of this class. This feature justifies CL 9/10 to be labeled N class.

E19   a) I-mbusi i-nu ni nooto
        CL9-goat-con-this-is-small
       b) Ji-mbusi ji-nu ni nooto
    CL10-goats-con-these-are-small
   These goats are small
      c) Ji-ndugu ji-nu ni ndeela
        CL10-walls -con-these-are-high
      These walls are high

The adjective *tooto* (small) becomes *nooto* (tooto + N > ntooto > noto while *leela* (long/tall) becomes *ndeela* (lela +N > n+leela > nleele >ndeela.

Noun class 11/10
This is a class which includes nouns of different categories. Nouns of this class begin with prefix *lu-* while their plural forms start with prefix *ji-* which is the Noun Class 10 prefix as we saw above. For example:

E20 Class 11   Class 10
     o-lu-bhaála ='sideø'   ji-mbaála ='sidesø'
     o-lu-bhaale ='head woundø'   ji-mbaale ='head wounds'
     o-lubhasi 'ufito'   ji-mbasi 'fito'
     o-lu-bhau ='piece of timberø'   ji-mbau ='pieces of timber/woodø'
     o-lu-bhafu ='bristø'   ji-mbafu ='bristsø'
     o-lubhuga ='(playing) groundø'   ji-mbuga ='(playing) grounds

Noun Class 11/6
Some Echijita nouns of class 11 do take prefix *ma-* of class 6 to form the plural nouns of this class. For example:

E21   Class 11   Class 6
      o-lu-fufi ='body hairø'   a-ma-fufi ='body hairsø'

o-lu-koko ÷crustø   a-ma-koko ÷crustsø
o-lu-lakoko ÷fleaø   a-ma-lakoko ÷fleasø
o-lu-nyaasi ÷grassø   a-ma-nyasi ÷grassesø

The NC 11class marker is *lu-* or *lw-* if it is followed by a vowel. This prefix is an agreeing element that is attached to every constituent in a construction that is syntactically controlled by the noun as we see in E22 below.

E22 a) o-*lu*-goye *lu*-nu ni *lu*-leela
    pre-CL11- rope-con-this-is-con-long
    This rope is long
  b) o-*lu*-bhaala *lu*-nu ni *lw*-aakisi
    Pre-CL11-place-con-this-is-con-good
     This place is good
  c) O-*lu*-goye *lw*-ao *lu*-leela *lw*a-bhoya engondi y-ani
    Pre-CL11 rope-con-your-con-long-subj-trapped-sheep-con-mine
      Your long rope trapped my sheep
  d) O-*lu*-bhafu *lu*-nu ndowo *lw*a-mafunika?
    Pre-CL11-rib -con-this-is the -broken
     Is this the broken rib?
  e) O-*lu*-bhibhi *li*-nu *lw*-atulilwe naga?
    Pre-con-boundary-this-marked-who?
     Who marked the boundary?

NC 11 class marker *lu-* can take attributive adjective as in ÷O-lu-goye lu-leelaø but for the predicative adjective it takes feature N hence become: ÷O-lu-nyasi ni ndelaø This class marker ÷lu- is similar to the Kiswahili NC11 class marker u- which is displayed in all its constituents in a construction except for adjectives too which take the cocord for N class.

Noun Class 12/13
Class 12 is an inclusive class as it brings in nouns denoting concrete objects that cut across animates (humans and animals) and things. Cf. a-ka-ana, a-ka-dume, a-ka-jangu, a-ka-gofila, a-ka-bhasa, a-ka-bhiga etc. This is because they are the nouns of creatures or objects which can be made or become small. This is a class of diminutives. For example:

Class 1: o-munu can have the diminutive prefix *ka-* added to it and have *a-ka-nu*, omuyali becomes *a-ka-yali,* omulume >*a-ka-lume*, omulamu >*a-ka-lamu*, omusoko >*a-ka-soko*, omugenyi >*a-ka-genyi,* omulimi >*a-ka-limu*;
Class 3: omuyaga becomes *a-ka-yaga,* omwose >*a-k-wose,*
omujinga >*a-ka-jinga,* omulimu >*a-ka-limu,* omulago >*a-ka-lago*;
Class 5: liilo >*a-ka-ilo,* lilibhwa >*a-ka-libhwa,* likubhi >*a-ka-kubhi,*
likula >*a-ka-kula,* liiwa >*a-ka-iwa,* libhele >*a-ka-bhele*.
Class 7 : echitooke >*a-ka-tooke*, echituungu >*a-ka-tuungu*, echinu >*a-ka-nu*, echilato >*a-ka-lato,* echitambala >*a-ka-tambala*;

Class 9 : imbusi becomes *a-ka-bhusi*, imbwa >*a-ka-mbwa,* imbwagasi >*a-ka-mbwagasi,* imbwiga >*a-ka-mbwiga,* imeeja >*a-ka-meeja,* imembe >*a-ka-membe.*

The plurals of NC12 forms class 13 nouns by replacing *-ka-* with *–tu-* hence a-ka-bhusi becomes o-tu-bhusi, a-ka-mbwiga becomes o-tu-mbwiga etc. This means then that prefix *tu-* is the class marker for NC 13. The following examples reflect a sample of these noun classes

E23 Class 12   Class 13

a-ka-anu	꞊tiny personø	o-tu-nu	꞊tiny peopleø
a-ka-yaali	꞊tiny heroø	o-tu-yaali	꞊tiny heroesø
a-ka-lume	꞊tiny manø	o-tu-lume	꞊tiny menø
a-ka-soko	꞊tiny enemyø	o-tu-soko	꞊tiny enemiesø
a-kw-ose ÷ flywhiskø		o-tw-ose,	꞊flywhisksø
a-ka-jinga	꞊small beehive	o-tu-jinga	꞊small beehivesø

The nominal prefix of class 12 nouns *ka-* and *tu-* for class 13 all appear as agreements of elements that are controlled by the class prefix. For example the nominal prefix *ka-* of class 12 in E24 is attached to the demonstrative and adjectives in a), d) and f) where it appears also as subject prefix. Nominal prefix *tu-* for class 13 triggers agreements in demonstratives, adjectives and verbs as we see in b), c), e) and g) below.

E24 a) O-tu-lato-tu-nu-tu-yaya tu-ghusibhwa tw-ote
        Pre-CL13-shoes-con-these-con-new-subj-be sold-con-all
         All these tiny shoes have been sold
     b) A-ka-bhusi ka-nu ni ka-yame
        Pre-CL12-goat-con-this-is-con-fat
      This small goat is fat
     c) O-tu-bhusi-tu-nu-ni tu-yame
        Pre-CL13-goats-con-these-are fat
       These small goats are fat
     d) A-ka-lato-ka-nu-ka-tule
         Pre- CL12- shoe-con-this-subj-take away
        Take away this tiny shoe
     e) O-tu-lato-tu-nu-tu-tule
         Pre- CL13- shoes-con-these-subj-take away
        Take away these tiny shoes

Noun class 14
This is generally a class of abstracts although it has also some concrete nouns. Class 14 nouns begin with prefix *bhu-*.Nouns of this class have no plural forms because as abstract nouns they are uncountable nouns. For example:

E25
o-bhu-bhiibhi	꞊badnessø	o-bhu-chafu	꞊filthø
o-bhu-fula	꞊generosityø	o-bhu-bhuya	꞊skillø
o-bhu-chinji	꞊slaughteringø	o-bhu-bhini	꞊playingø
o-bhu-bhobhoti	꞊whisperingø	o-bhu-bhosi	꞊rottingø
o-bhu-bhumi	꞊beatingø	o-bhu-chungusi	꞊liberatingø

Noun Class14/6

Class 14 has some nouns which are concrete nouns and hence can be counted and thus have plural forms which take the prefix *ma-* of class 6:

E26 o-bhu-koma ‡bowø   a-ma-koma ‡bowsø
o-bhu-lemo ‡fight/warø   a-ma-lemo ‡fights/warsø
o-bhu-lili ‡bedø   a-ma-lili ‡bedsø
o-bhu-fufi ‡animal hairø   a-ma-fufi ‡animal hairsø
o-bhu-gi ‡fish eggø   o-bhu-gi ‡fish eggsø

There is also uncountable nouns such as o-bhu-fila ‡pusø

The nominal and the pronominal prefix of nouns of this class is *bhu-* as can be seen in **E25** below.

E27 a) O-*bhu*-koma *bhw*-ao *bhu*-bhulile
Pre-CL14-bow-con-your-subj-lost
Your bow is lost
b) O-*bhu*-lwaye *bhu*-nu ni *bhu*-bhiibhi
Pre-CL14-illness-con-this-is-con-bad
This illness is bad
c) O-*bhu*-fula *bhw*-ae *bhwa*-mu-kolee endwe
Pre-CL14-generosity-con-his-subj-obj-make-be loved
His generosity made him to be loved
d) O-*bhu*-fui *bhw*-ae-ni-*bhwa*-kisi
Pre-CL14-shortness-con-his-is-good
His shortness is good
e) O-*bhu*-lili *bhu*-nu ni *bhwa*-ani
Pre-CL14-bed-con-this is-con-mine
This bed is mine

All the constituent elements that are controlled by the noun in each of the constructions, take the concord *bhu-/bhw-* depending on the initial character of the root of the agreeing element: the possessive adjectives in a), c), d) and e), demonstratives in b) and e), adjectives in b) and d), and the verbs in a) and c).

Class 15: Class Prefix ku-

This is a class of infinitive nouns i.e. verbs which are prefixed the infinitive marker *ku-* and function as a noun in a construction. The infinitive ku- is usually followed by a verb root if it is immediately followed by a consonant, but if it is followed by a verb whose initial character is a vowel it becomes kw-For example:

E28
o-ku-bhuma ‡beatingø   o-kw-eenda (o-ku-enda) (loving)
o-ku-chilwaána ‡attackingø   o-kw-ekaya (o-ku-ekaya) (erring)

The infinitives have the same form as verbs but like all nouns, they manifest concordial agreements in the form of *ku-* or *kw-* between the noun and the adjective, the demonstrative and the verb in a sentence. For example:

E29   a) O-kw-enya kw-ebhwe ku-chikondi-sya

Pre-NC15-playing- con-their-subj-please-cause

Their playing pleases us

b) O-ku-libhata kw-ao ku-sekya

Pre-NC15-walking-con-your-subj-laugh

Your walking makes me laugh

c) O-ku-twaala o-mu-gasi ni kw-akisi

Pre-CL15-marry-wife-is good

Marrying a wife is good

d) o-kwe-nya kwa-ni ku-nu ni kw-akisi

Pre-cl 15 playing-con-this-is-con-good

My playing is good

Noun Class 15a

This is a class which includes parts of human body but has a prefix *ku-*. The language has very few nouns in this class and yet it shares plural prefix with Noun class 6 that is prefix *ma-*. For example:

E30 Class 15   Class 6

o-ku-bhoko ‑handø   a-ma-bhoko ‑handsø

o-ku-twi   ‑earø   a-ma-twi ‑earsø

o-ku-gu   ‑legø   a-ma-gu ‑legsø

o-kw-esi   ‑moonø

o-kw-esi   ‑monthø   a-mesi ‑monthsø

o-kw-itabhilisya ‑echoø

The nominal prefix of this class is *ku-* which is also the pronominal prefix. It is prefixed to the adjectives, demonstratives, possessives and the verb where it functions as a subject prefix as shown in the examples below.

E31 a) O-*ku*-twi *ku*-mwi *ku*-nu ni *kw*-ani

Pre-CL15-ear-one-con-here-is mine

The one ear here is mine

b) O-*ku*-twi *kw*-ani *ku*-fwimbile

Pre-CL15-ear-con-mine-has swelled

My ear has swelled

c) O-ku-gulu kw-ao kw-ataja o-ku-bhoko-kw-ani

Pre-CL15-leg-con-your-subj-trampled on-pre-con-hand-con-mine

Your leg trampled on my hand

Noun Class 16, 17, 18.

These are locative classes whose nouns denote place. These classes are represented by the prefix ha-, he-and mu as in the words halya, helya and mulya as in the following sentences:

E33 a) M-sile *he*-lya mu-mulyango

Him-take-CL16-there-at-door place

Take him to the door
b) M-sile *ha*-lya kula
Him-take-CL17-there-far
Take him far away
c) M-sile *mu*-lya munda
CL18-Him-take-there inside
Take him inside
d) *Mu*-nyumba ni akisi
CL18-house is beautiful
Inside the house is beautiful

Noun class 18a

It is interesting to note that the language has also words that could be placed under class 18 which have the prefix mu- of place though not necessarily denoting ‑inside‑ but in some cases it does and in other cases it may be implied only. What is important here is that in all these nouns the underlying denotation is place. For example:

E34   munda   ‑inside‑
            mumatengejo   ‑on the ceiling‑
            mubhunule   ‑fertile land‑
            mulumoga   ‑clayed ground‑
            mwitete   ‑swampy area‑
            mwiugo   ‑valley area‑

1. Kundugu luliko olugoye (On the wall there is a rope)

2. Ika aliyo omugeni (There is a guest at your house)

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

An analysis of the NC in Kiswahili and Echijita reveals that the two languages have many aspects in common although there are some differences too. In both languages there is no one class except for Kiswahili NC1/2 which has nouns denoting one semantic feature such as animate in Kiswahili.

Almost in all NC there are categories of the noun denoting deferent connotations, e.g. animal part (eye), part of a tree (flower), natural phenomena (rain) etc. Both languages have prefixes which are the class markers for each category of nouns although Echijita has pre- prefixes to some nouns which Kiswahili seems to have lost them, assuming that all Bantu languages had this feature at their inception as the example in Table 5 shows.

Both languages have common features in the first 10 NCs i.e. from NC1 ó NC10 like many other languages such as Kinyamwezi, Giriama or Sisumbwa as shown in Table 1 and 2 above.

Table 5

Noun Class	Kiswahili		Echijita	
		Prefix	Pre-prefix	Prefix
1	-	mu-	o-	mu-
2	-	wa-	a-	bha-
3	-	mu-	o-	mu-
4	-	mi-	e-	mi-
6	-	ma-	a-	ma-
7	-	ki-	e-	chi-
8	-	vi-	e-	bhi-
11	-	u-	o-	lu-
12	-	-	a-	ka-
13	-	-	o-	tu-

An examination of each class shows elements of similarity and differences too.NC1 and NC2 mu-/wa- and mu-/bha- are classes for humans, whether nouns begin with the class prefix or not. For example, although kinship terms do not take NC class prefix at all in Kiswahili and take only in NC2 in Echijita, they all take class pronominal prefixes.

> **m**-toto hu**yu** *a*-nalima
> **wa**-tu ha**wa** *wa*-nalima
> baba hu**yu** *a*-nalima
> baba **hawa** *wa*-nalima
> O**mu**wana **u**nu **a**mubhuma omuifi
> A**bha**na **bha**nu **bha**mubhuma omuifi
> Lata **u**nu **a**mubhuma omuifi
> **Bha**lata **bha**nu **bha**mubhuma omuifi

Another difference here is the inclusion of all nouns denoting living creatures (animals, birds, insects and fish) in NC1/2 in Kiswahili since they take the class adjectival prefix and class pronominal prefix but Echijita excludes them as it puts them in NC 9/10 because they do not share the pronominal prefix with Echijita NC1/2.

> Mbuzi hu**yu** ni **m**dogo (This goat is small)
> Mbuzi ha**wa** ni **wa**dogo (These goats are small)
>
> i-mbusi i-nu ni nooto (This goat is small)
> ji-mbusi ji-nu ni nooto (These goats are small)

The only exception is a few animals and insects such as wakulu ó bha-kulu (tortoise); walubhubhi - bha-walubhubhi (spiders); walukelwe =frogø - bha-walukelwe (frogs) which together with the kinship terms they take the NC2 prefix..

NC3/4 exhibit similar class markers mu- and mi- but differ in their pronominal prefixes. Kiswahili NC3/4 has u- and i- respectively, while Echijita has gu and ji. A notable difference is the way each language has put similar categories of nouns in different classes. For example while Kiswahili puts all plants/trees in NC3/4 (mu-/mi-), Echijita puts plants in NC5/6 which is li-/ma class. Although in Kiswahili NC5/6 is ji-/ma- class, these classes contain nouns denoting fruits and other noun categories but not plants/trees. NC7/8 are similar in both languages except that the class prefixes of one language are variants of the other and not different. Cf Kiswahili ki-/vi- and Echijita chi-/bhi-. Their adjectival and pronominal prefixes are similar too. These classes in both languages are essentially classes of objects/things as most of them belong to this category.

NC9/10 are usually termed as N classes in Kiswahili because most nouns in these classes except for loan words begin with nasals and as such they have zero prefixes. In Echijita these nouns begin with nasals except that they are preceded by prefixes. The nasal is usually realized in an adjectival prefix that is attached to the noun which does not take the nominal prefix.

Cf.   i-mbusi ni nooto (a goat is small),
         ji-mbusi ni nooto (goats are small) .

 Remember =tooto∅ means small in Echijita. For example:.o-mu-ana o-mu-tooto (small child).

NC 11 is the same for both languages: u- and lu- and both borrow the plural forms for these languages from NC10.

Class	Kiswahili	Echijita
NC 11	u-	lu-
NC 10	m-	ji-

Cf **u**-bao (Kiswahili) - o-**lu**-bhau (Echijita) (=piece of timber); **m**-bao - **ji**-mbau (=pieces of timber); **u**-bavu - o-**lu**-bhafu (rib); **m**-bavu - **ji**-mbafu (ribs). The prefixes u- and lu- are variants. The later is the old form which is still found in many Bantu languages.

 NC 12/13 is found in Echijita. This is a dimunitive prefix found in many Bantu languages especially NC12 but none is commonly found in Kiswahili which uses NC7/8 prefixes to express diminutive sense. Abstract nouns are expressed by the NC14 prefix bhu- and u- in Echijita and Kiswahili respectively. The prefixes are variants and bhu- is the old Bantu form which Kiswahili has abandoned in favour of u-.

NC 15 is essentially a class of infinitives in both languages but Kiswahili differs from Echijita in two aspects.

1) Echijita has pre-prefix here too. For example: o-ku-lema (Echijita) - ku-kataa (Kiswahili) ÷denyingø, o-ku-bhuma - ku-piga ÷beatingø,
o-ku-bhooja ó ku-okota ÷pickingø, o-ku-bhúsya óku-uliza ÷askingø
2) Echijita includes also nouns denoting body parts such as o-*ku*-bhoko ÷handø, o-*ku*-twi ÷earø, o-*ku*-gu ÷legøetc.
The NC 16-18 denote location in both languages with similar connotations.

CONCLUSION
The paper has shown the different noun classes in Echijita and Kiswahili. From this classification, we have seen that the Echijita retains most of the basic noun class characteristics of Bantu languages which are missing in Kiswahili. In this analysis we have seen that each noun class reveals specific morphological and syntactical characteristics that identify nouns that belong to a noun class irrespective of their nominal prefix. This is more evident in CL1 nouns where we see some nouns lacking the class prefix and yet took the plural prefix of the class which is also CL2 prefix in the case of Echijita. But in the case of Kiswahili we noted that nouns not exhibiting the noun class marker for NC1 or NC2 which are classes for humans, took class concords (nominal prefix or subject prefix) which is indicative of the fact that they belong to those classes. Our classification has also revealed that most nouns in these languages have plural forms except noun class 9/10, 16, 17 and 18 for Kiswahili and noun classes 16, 17, and 18 for Echijita. Finally, it is worth noting here that nouns of a class irrespective of whether they belong to underived noun stem or derived from verbs (see CL1 and 2 and CL 3 and 4) they manifest similar morphological and syntactic characteristics of the class. Semantically we have seen that these languages place nouns denoting animates except humans in different noun classes. Both languages put nouns denoting humans in NC1 and NC2 but Echijita put those deoting animals in NC9 and NC10 while in Kiswahili all animates are put in NC1 and NC2. The same for plants/trees. Kiswahili puts all nouns denoting plants in NC3 /mu-/ and NC4 /mi/ but Echijita puts them under NC5 /li-/ and NC6 /ma-/.

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