

## Noun Formation in Mashami

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### Abstract

*This paper examines the morphology of the noun in Mashami, a Tanzanian Bantu language (E62) spoken on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, and describes the various ways in which a noun may be formed. Mashami illustrates the continuing modification of the grammatical and semantic structure of the Bantu noun class system, showing that the system has become quite arbitrary and is comparable to grammatical gender systems in many languages of the world. At the same time, an underlying semantic motive is clearly operative and gets exploited in creative ways to derive new forms for the lexicon. And this creativity, based on shifting and expanding worldviews, wreaks havoc to the traditional distinction between inflection and derivation.*

**Keywords:** *morphology of the noun in Mashami, grammatical and semantic structure of the Bantu noun class system, inflection, derivation*

### Introduction

This paper examines the morphology of the noun in Mashami, a Tanzanian Bantu language (E62) spoken on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, and describes the various ways in which a noun may be formed. It discusses the semantic coherence (or incoherence) of the noun classes and shows that some logic is still operative in assigning new nouns and borrowed items to noun classes. The paper also illustrates the blurred distinction between derivation and inflection. It shows that the noun class prefixes may be regarded as marking gender and number distinctions, which are traditional inflectional categories, as well as working to derive new nouns with various degrees of semantic relationship to the original noun (Spencer & Zwicky, 1998). And finally the paper highlights the continuing erosion of the noun class system towards a more simplified set of contrasts, i.e. fewer noun class distinctions.

### Noun Structure

The underived noun consists of the class prefix and the stem.

(1)

| <b>Noun</b>   | <b>Gloss</b> | <b>Noun</b>            | <b>Gloss</b> |
|---------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>ú-rô</i>   | gullet       | <i>u-batá</i>          | 'ladle'      |
| <i>ki-tê</i>  | dog          | <i>i-ghúbhâ[i@úbâ]</i> | 'lake, pool' |
| <i>i-rémá</i> | darkness     | <i>ki-lwá</i>          | 'frog'       |

The derived noun consists of the class prefix, the stem, and the derivational suffix (for which see section 3.2).

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(2)

| Derived noun     | Gloss     | Source verb     | Gloss        |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>ki-réíy-o</i> | document  | <i>i-réíy-a</i> | 'to write'   |
| <i>i-máám-u</i>  | urine     | <i>i-máám-a</i> | 'to urinate' |
| <i>n-kund-é</i>  | lover     | <i>i-kund-a</i> | 'to love'    |
| <i>n-ghum-î</i>  | messenger | <i>i-ghum-â</i> | 'to send'    |

**The Noun Classes**

Nouns referring to human beings are found in classes 1 and 2 which form a singular/plural pair. The other pairs are 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 9 & 10.

(3)

| Class 1               | Class 2                  | Gloss              |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>mu-umbî</i>        | <i>bh-ombî [ba-umbî]</i> | 'creator, potter'  |
| <i>ń-ghíngî</i>       | <i>bhá-ghíngî</i>        | 'protector, guard' |
| <i>n-ká [ŋká]</i>     | <i>bha-ká</i>            | 'woman, wife'      |
| <i>m-mikú</i>         | <i>ba-mikú</i>           | 'old man'          |
| <i>n-kokú [ŋkokú]</i> | <i>bha-kokú</i>          | 'infant'           |
| <i>n-korî [ŋkorî]</i> | <i>bha-korî</i>          | 'cook'             |

The *mu-* prefix of class 1, after losing the vowel, assimilates to the place of articulation of the following consonant. In this respect, its form becomes indistinguishable from that of the class 9/10 prefix. In the examples above, the phonetic representations of five nouns in class 1 have been provided to make clear the fact that the nasal prefix is of the same place of articulation as the following consonant. However, in the rest of the examples that follow, an orthographic form is provided where the letter 'n' usually stands for alveolar, palatal, and velar nasals. Borrowed nouns referring to human beings will often be assigned to this class, as examples in (4) show.

(4)

| Class 1         | Class 2           | Gloss             | Source                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>n-sikári</i> | <i>bha-sikári</i> | 'soldier'         | askari [Swahili]          |
| <i>n-samíni</i> | <i>wa-samíni</i>  | 'guarantor'       | mdhamini [Swahili/Arabic] |
| <i>n-risî</i>   | <i>bha-risî</i>   | 'heir'            | mrithi [Swahili/Arabic]   |
| <i>m-bungê</i>  | <i>wa-bungê</i>   | 'parliamentarian' | mbunge [Swahili/Nyamwezi] |

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There are exceptions to this of course, more of which see below under the discussion on classes 5/6 and 9/10.

Classes 3 and 4 consist of nouns denoting things in the physical landscape, typically trees, and rivers.

(5)

| <b>Class 3</b> | <b>Class 4</b> | <b>Gloss</b>     |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>mu-nyí</i>  | <i>mi-nyí</i>  | 'handle'         |
| <i>mú-ghâ</i>  | <i>mí-ghâ</i>  | 'river, sea'     |
| <i>n-ghí</i>   | <i>mi-ghí</i>  | 'tree, medicine' |
| <i>mu-bhá</i>  | <i>mi-bhá</i>  | 'sugarcane'      |

In reality, the nouns found in these classes consist of a heterogeneous lot, without a readily identifiable unifying semantic domain. The sample below includes some general and abstract nouns, body parts, animals, and insects.

(6)

| <b>Class 3</b>   | <b>Class 4</b>    | <b>Gloss</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <i>n-dooró</i>   | <i>mi-dooró</i>   | 'ululation'  |
| <i>n-gháási</i>  | <i>mi-gháási</i>  | 'dawn'       |
| <i>n-ghaúko</i>  | <i>mi-ghaúko</i>  | 'cleavage'   |
| <i>n-ghimâ</i>   | <i>mi-ghimâ</i>   | 'spirit'     |
| <i>n-lálê</i>    | <i>mí-lálê</i>    | 'soot'       |
| <i>n-ní</i>      | <i>mí-ní</i>      | 'finger/toe' |
| <i>n-nyángwe</i> | <i>mi-nyángwe</i> | 'firefly'    |
| <i>n-sáú</i>     | <i>mi-sáú</i>     | 'termite'    |
| <i>n-shúngú</i>  | <i>mí-shúngú</i>  | 'donkey'     |

The singular prefix (class 3) is similar to that of class 1 and behaves in a similar way with regard to assimilating to the place of articulation of the stem consonant after losing the vowel. But the underlying bilabial nasal is apparent in vowel initial stems like *moghu* 'beehive' and *mugho* 'fire', as well as some nouns that may still lexically have resisted vowel loss like *mu-nyí* 'handle', *mú-ghâ* 'river', and *mu-bhá* 'sugarcane'.

Classes 5 and 6 consist of miscellaneous nouns, including non-count items like milk and saliva. The class 5 prefix has lost the consonant [l] which still surfaces in the agreement forms (see Tables 1 and 2).

(7)

| <b>Class 5</b>    | <b>Class 6</b>     | <b>Gloss</b>        |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <i>i-bháághí</i>  | <i>ma-bháághí</i>  | 'blister'           |
| <i>i-bhabháso</i> | <i>ma-bhabháso</i> | 'commandment, rule' |
| <i>i-dubha</i>    | <i>ma-dubha</i>    | 'sisal'             |
| <i>i-fanû</i>     | <i>ma-fanû</i>     | 'mask, carving'     |
| <i>i-fû</i>       | <i>ma-fû</i>       | 'ash'               |
| -                 | <i>ma-lelá</i>     | 'milk'              |
| <i>y-aaghe</i>    | <i>m-aaghe</i>     | 'saliva'            |
| <i>i-fubhé</i>    | <i>ma-fubhé</i>    | 'baboon'            |

While these classes may consist of quite heterogeneous nouns semantically, they are

the classes that participate in the formation of augmentative and pejorative senses. If a noun is moved from its canonical class into these classes it will typically be interpreted as acquiring meanings of increased size and/or undesirable features/qualities (see 3.1 below). Similarly nouns that refer to human beings seen as not representing the normative qualities of humans, including despised neighbours/foreigners<sup>1</sup>, may be placed in these classes.

(8)

| Class 5            | Class 6             | Gloss                         |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>í-sóngá</i>     | <i>má-sóngá</i>     | 'prostitute (woman)'          |
| <i>í-seká</i>      | <i>ma-seká</i>      | 'uncircumcised man'           |
| <i>í-kétí</i>      | <i>má-kétí</i>      | 'senior bachelor'             |
| <i>i-tondó</i>     | <i>ma-tondó</i>     | 'idiot'                       |
| <i>i-rumanungú</i> | <i>ma-rumanungú</i> | 'idiot'                       |
| <i>i-shingá</i>    | <i>ma-shingá</i>    | 'servant'                     |
| <i>i-kwáábhi</i>   | <i>ma-kwáábhi</i>   | 'Maasai (Kwavi)/naked person' |
| <i>i-nyamusi</i>   | <i>ma-nyamusi</i>   | 'Nyamwezi/servant'            |
| <i>i-simbá</i>     | <i>ma-simbá</i>     | 'rich person'                 |

Some borrowed nouns referring to human beings fall into this set, but unlike the nouns with negative connotations above, the agreement pattern is with classes 1 and 2, acknowledging their human (animacy) features in this way. This pattern includes nouns (below) that were borrowed from/via Swahili with their classification already determined, and so do not participate in the native world view of 'good vs bad' humans apparent in the nouns above.

(9)

| Class 5         | Class 6            | Gloss        | Class 5       | Class 6          | Gloss     |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| <i>asikofû</i>  | <i>ma-sikofû</i>   | 'bishop'     | <i>nesî</i>   | <i>ma-nesî</i>   | 'nurse'   |
| <i>diwanî</i>   | <i>ma-diwanî</i>   | 'councillor' | <i>jajî</i>   | <i>ma-jajî</i>   | 'judge'   |
| <i>dakitari</i> | <i>ma-dakitari</i> | 'doctor'     | <i>fundî</i>  | <i>ma-fundî</i>  | 'artisan' |
| <i>hakimû</i>   | <i>ma-hakimû</i>   | 'magistrate' | <i>derefâ</i> | <i>ma-derefâ</i> | 'driver'  |

The singular forms have no nominal prefix, so it is on the evidence of the class 6 plural prefix that they are regarded as class 5 nouns. An alternative classification might place them in class 9 with other nouns without a nominal prefix. But either decision is debatable because it weights the prefix (or its absence) heavily in determining class, whereas, as already noted in connection with the homophony of the class 1 and 3 prefixes, other features (semantics, agreement) have to play a part. In this case, contrast the class 2 agreement in the first example below with the class

<sup>1</sup> The concept of 'foreigner' subsumes people who are not members of the speech community and is a common category in societies. In Mashami, the term for foreigner is *casáka* literary 'of/from the wild/bush'; in Gogo it is *nghúngugo* 'gentile/of (other) nations', which is similar to the Haya term *omunyamahanga* 'of (other) nations'. The Maasai term for their Kamba adversaries is *iloong'u* 'those who stink'. So, for Mashami to place the Maasai and Nyamwezi in the company of idiots, servants, the unmarried, and the uncircumcised speaks of a speech community's world view

6 agreement in the second example even though both nouns have the class 6 nominal prefix:

(10)

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>ma</i> diwani <i>wa</i> Masama ni <i>wak</i> asha | ‘The councillors of Masama are bad.’ |
| <i>ma</i> kwabhi <i>a</i> Masama ni <i>ma</i> kasha  | ‘The Maasai of Masama are bad.’      |

In this wider perspective, the shape of the nouns is misleading as the nouns are stuck with an inappropriate prefix which the language failed to get rid of at borrowing.

Classes 7 and 8 constitute the typical ‘thing’ classes although that is a nebulous concept since the group is as heterogeneous as the rest, with the exception of the human classes 1 and 2. The examples below do not seem to have any coherent binder and include nouns for animals and people (NOT all of them with less than the normative human qualities):

(11)

| Class 7             | Class 8                         | Gloss                     |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>ki</i> -ndô      | <i>fi</i> -ndô                  | ‘thing’                   |
| <i>ki</i> -dede     | <i>fi</i> -dede                 | ‘top, peak’               |
| <i>ki</i> -déébhâ   | <i>fi</i> -déébhâ               | ‘wooden dish’             |
| <i>ki</i> -dégô     | <i>fi</i> -dégô;                | ‘curse, spell’            |
| <i>ki</i> -dáû      | <i>fi</i> -dáû                  | ‘flat/palm of hand’       |
| <i>ki</i> -dáû      | <i>fi</i> -dáû ( <i>slang</i> ) | ‘one who likes to gossip’ |
| <i>ki</i> -lemýí    | <i>fi</i> -lemýí                | ‘argumentative person’    |
| <i>ki</i> -sukú     | <i>fi</i> -sukú                 | ‘prophet’                 |
| <i>ki</i> -sóngóghû | <i>fi</i> -sóngóghû             | ‘leader’                  |
| <i>ki</i> -lwá      | <i>fi</i> -lwá                  | ‘frog’                    |
| <i>ki</i> -nankúúru | <i>fi</i> -nankúúru             | ‘mongoose’                |
| <i>ki</i> -tê       | <i>fi</i> -tê                   | ‘dog’                     |

Classes 9 and 10 are marked by a nasal prefix or no prefix at all. As noted above there are many instances where the prefix will be indistinguishable in form from that of a noun in class 1 and class 3. But there is an underlying difference. Whereas in classes 1 and 3 the consonant is a bilabial nasal that appears when a vowel follows it, in classes 9/10 the consonant is an alveolar nasal that appears when a vowel follows, as in: *n-ungú* ‘pot’, and *n-ángúsa* ‘confusion’.

(12)

| Class 9         | Class 10        | Gloss            | Class 9         | Class 10        | Gloss             |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>ny</i> -íshé | <i>ny</i> -íshé | ‘cockroach’      | <i>n-ungú</i>   | <i>n-ungú</i>   | ‘earthenware pot’ |
| <i>m</i> -bughû | <i>m</i> -bughû | ‘sheep, goat’    | <i>n-ángúsa</i> | <i>n-ángúsa</i> | ‘confusion’       |
| <i>n</i> -dogho | <i>n</i> -dogho | ‘colobus monkey’ | <i>ny</i> -índâ | <i>ny</i> -índâ | ‘banana plant’    |
| <i>n</i> -gúbhê | <i>n</i> -gúbhê | ‘pig’            | <i>n</i> -dibhí | <i>n</i> -dibhí | ‘calabash’        |

In addition, the nasal prefix in native nouns is realized only if the following consonant is voiced. This means that historically a phonological rule deleted the nasal consonant if the following obstruent was voiceless<sup>2</sup>. So, if a sequence of nasal plus voiceless obstruent does surface (as above in classes 1 and 3) this will be a sign that the noun does not belong to classes 9/10 because such a sequence is a later result of vowel deletion.

(13)

| Class 9      | Class 10     | Gloss        | Class 9      | Class 10     | Gloss     |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| <i>káyi</i>  | <i>káyi</i>  | 'ceiling'    | <i>símbô</i> | <i>símbô</i> | 'harvest' |
| <i>kásâ</i>  | <i>kásâ</i>  | 'wilderness' | <i>samû</i>  | <i>samû</i>  | 'blood'   |
| <i>fínya</i> | <i>fínya</i> | 'health'     | <i>tutu</i>  | <i>tutu</i>  | 'heel(s)' |

It is on the analogy of the zero prefix nouns that many loan words are assigned to these classes to join the group of nouns without a prefix. This is illustrated by the next four examples. The absence of a separate plural form as well as the agreement affixes on noun dependents and on the verb will be sufficient indicators of membership in classes 9/10.

(14)

| Class 9         | Class 10        | Gloss                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>pakíti</i>   | <i>pakíti</i>   | 'packet' (f. English) |
| <i>káábha</i>   | <i>káábha</i>   | 'coffee' (f. Swahili) |
| <i>káráma</i>   | <i>káráma</i>   | 'talent' (f. Swahili) |
| <i>karatasi</i> | <i>karatasi</i> | 'paper' (f. Swahili)  |

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<sup>2</sup> Similar rules in several Bantu languages may delete the obstruent and leave the voiceless feature on the nasal segment (this is the origin of the voiceless nasals in Gogo for example), or delete all obstruent features completely, as in these Kisi examples: 11/10 *lu-tɛfu/nɛfu* 'mat/mats'; 11/10 *lu-kɛtu/ɲɛtu* 'razor' (Ngonyani, 2013)

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These are the classes usually regarded as typical for animal nouns across the various Bantu languages. There may indeed be a significant tendency for an animal noun to be found in classes 9/10 in Mashami, but there are many other nouns in there, and as already shown in the preceding presentation, nouns for animals may be found in several of the other classes as well. In the class 9/10 examples above, there are nouns for animals as well as for other general entities.

As already noted, some human nouns fall into classes 9/10. These may be of two types, viz. those that have been borrowed and native words with a negative connotation. The borrowed nouns will follow the usual pattern in which the agreement is governed by the animacy feature in classes 1 and 2. These are in many respects similar to the nouns assigned to classes 5/6 discussed above, the only difference being the absence of a separate plural form.

(15)

| <b>Example</b>   | <b>Gloss</b> |                    |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <i>serusééru</i> | 'albino'     | zeruzeru [Swahili] |
| <i>shotara</i>   | 'half-caste' | chotara [Swahili]  |

The native nouns on the other hand bring together entities that are regarded as failures vis a vis the standard of the speech community. The agreement pattern for these nouns cannot follow the animacy feature – in effect they are treated as if they were not animate/human.

(16)

| <b>Example</b> | <b>Gloss</b>                             |
|----------------|--|
| <i>mbólé</i>   | 'husband who lives at in-laws' compound' |
| <i>samburâ</i> | 'uncircumcised woman'                    |

Class 11 nouns take their plural in class 10a, where a special prefix *ngí* is available for this purpose although some of the nouns do not take it. It is not clear to me what the origin of this prefix is.

(17)

| <b>Singular class 11</b> | <b>Plural class 10a</b>                               | <b>Gloss</b>                                       |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <i>ú-bángâ</i>           | <i>ngí-bángâ / ngí-ú-bángâ</i><br>(* <i>m-bángâ</i> ) | 'sword'  |
| <i>u-bhirî</i>           | <i>m-birî / ngí-bhirî</i>                             | 'whisk, blending stick'                            |
| <i>u-finâ</i>            | <i>ngí-u-finâ / ngí-finâ</i> (* <i>m-finâ</i> )       | 'dance used in initiation'<br>'ceremony for girls' |
| <i>u-rááwé</i>           | <i>ngí-u-rááwé / ngí-rááwé</i><br>(* <i>n-rááwé</i> ) | 'riddle'   |
| <i>u-sú</i>              | <i>ngí-sú</i>   | 'dagger, short sword'                              |
| <i>u-téégíhí</i>         | <i>ngí-téégíhí / ngí-u-téégíhí</i>                    | 'soil, earth'                                      |
| <i>u-bhágíhí</i>         | <i>m-bágíhí</i>                                       | 'generation'                                       |

|                         |                                       |                             |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>wálâ (u-álâ)</i>     | <i>ngy-álâ</i>                        | ‘cock’s spur’               |
| <i>wémbe (u-émbe)</i>   | <i>ngy-émbe</i>                       | ‘razor blade’               |
| <i>wémbé (u-bhémbé)</i> | <i>m-bémbé</i>                        | ‘horn of animal’            |
| <i>woyí (u-oyí)</i>     | <i>ngy-oyí</i>                        | ‘a slap’                    |
| <i>óyô</i>              | <i>ngy-óyô</i>                        | ‘piece of broken pot’       |
| <i>ú-bháyô</i>          | <i>ngy-áyô / ngi-bháyô (*m-báyô)</i>  | ‘sole, footprint’           |
| <i>u-batá</i>           | <i>m-batá / ngi-batá / ngy-u-batá</i> | ‘ladle, scoop for drinking’ |
| <i>u-rongó</i>          | <i>ngi-rongó</i>                      | ‘brain’                     |

The formation of the plural class 10a would be expected to utilize the homorganic nasal consonant as can be seen in *mbirî*, *mbághî*, *mbémbé*, *mbatá*. But this is not always the case as the ungrammatical *\*mbángá*, *\*mfiná*, *\*nrááwé*, and *\*mbáyô* show. It seems that there is a tendency to generalize what appears to be an innovation, using *ngi/ngy* in the formation of the plural for class 11 nouns irrespective of the shape of the initial segment on the root. If the singular class prefix *u-* is retained or if the stem has an initial vowel, the vowel in the plural prefix glides to form the *ngy-* variant; otherwise *ngi-* replaces the *u-* prefix.

Class 12 forms diminutives by prefixing *ka-* to nouns from other classes without dropping the original prefix. The plural is formed with the class 8 prefix *fí-*, and so there is no class 13.

(18)

| Class 12 (singular)           | Class 8 (plural)  | Gloss              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>ka-m-bughu</i>             | <i>fí-m-bughu</i> | ‘small goat/sheep’ |
| <i>ka-n-ghi</i>               | <i>fí-mi-ghi</i>  | ‘small tree’       |
| <i>ka-(i)-bata [kéé-bátâ]</i> | <i>fí-bátâ</i>    | ‘small duck’       |
| <i>ka-n-ká</i>                | <i>fí-bha-ká</i>  | ‘small woman’      |
| <i>ká-ń-ndú</i>               | <i>fí-bhá-ndú</i> | ‘small person’     |

Nouns designating abstract entities are in class 14. This class is still distinct from class 11 even though both classes have lost the consonant of the prefix which is still available in many other Bantu languages (*lu-* for class 11, and *bu-* for class 14; see Maho, 1999). Unlike class 11, class 14 does not have plural forms. Otherwise, the agreement forms are identical (Table 2 below). It is possible to argue, therefore, that class 14 has merged with class 11; that the absence of a plural form is predictable from the semantics of abstract nouns.

(19)

| Class 14=11     | Gloss                                     | Class 14=11      | Gloss           |
|-----------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| <i>u-ríngi</i>  | ‘antagonism, discord, mischief, betrayal’ | <i>u-nywa</i>    | ‘smallness’     |
| <i>ú-ńíní</i>   | ‘thievery’                                | <i>úghókó</i>    | ‘laziness’      |
| <i>ú-ńndú</i>   | ‘virtue’                                  | <i>ukushómbí</i> | ‘arrogance’     |
| <i>u-nyáási</i> | ‘fierceness, severity’                    | <i>usurí</i>     | ‘wealth, glory’ |



The names of countries and territories form a subset in this class and still provide some evidence of a separate class. Many such nouns take the *u-* nominal prefix but the agreement goes back to class 9. Contrast the first two examples below (with names of countries) displaying class 9 subject agreement with the last three which have class 14/11 subject agreement *lu-* and the associative marker *Iwa*.

(20)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Example</b>   | <b>Gloss</b>                                |
| <i>Udashi yabbinga</i> [ <i>i-a-bbinga</i> ]                   | ‘Germany has won.’                          |
| <i>Ulaya ilendee</i> [ <i>i-le-ndee</i> ] <i>shonga Uparen</i> | ‘Europe brought food to Pare land.’         |
| <i>Ufii Iwananga</i> [ <i>Ju-a-nanga</i> ]                     | ‘The shortness has become excessive.’       |
| <i>Umangi Iwa Mareale lu-ke-sha Masama</i>                     | ‘The reign of Mareale is coming to Masama.’ |
| <i>Ukasha Iwa makwabhi lu-ke-nanga</i>                         | ‘The evil of the Maasai is increasing.’     |

There are no nouns with the class 15 prefix *ku-*. Verb infinitives take the class five prefix *i-*, and so, on the basis of assigning more weight to the nominal prefix, these verbal nouns would be assigned to class 5. But the agreement affixes alternate between the class five *li-* and the *ku-* of class 15. This may indicate that the nominal prefix was originally *ku* as is still the case in other languages (Philipson et al., 2003)<sup>3</sup>. Table 1 summarizes the variation in the agreement affixes for classes 5/15.

**Table 1: Agreement Affixes for the Infinitive Nominal**

| Cl   | Pf. | Ex.          | Gloss    | subj.         | obj.          | adj.          | one           | this                 | that <sup>1</sup> | that <sup>2</sup>     | my            | con        |
|------|-----|--------------|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|
| 5/15 | i   | <i>ioghâ</i> | marrying | <i>ku/lyi</i> | <i>ku/lyi</i> | <i>ku/lyi</i> | <i>lyimwi</i> | <i>ilyi</i><br>/kunu | <i>ilyo</i>       | <i>ilya</i><br>/kulya | <i>lyakwa</i> | <i>lya</i> |

The examples that follow illustrate each of these possibilities.

(21)

|  |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <i>ighema nkusenyi / nlyisenyi</i>         |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <i>i-</i>                                  | <i>ghema</i> | <i>n-</i> |             | <i>ku- / lyi-</i> |  | <i>senyi</i>  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| class 5 prefix                             | cultivate    | initial   |             | class 15/5 subj   |  | be pleasant   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ‘Cultivating is pleasant.’ {subject}       |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <i>ighema nshilyikundye / nshikukundye</i> |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <i>i-</i>                                  | <i>ghema</i> | <i>n-</i> | <i>shi-</i> | <i>ku- / lyi-</i> |  | <i>kundye</i> |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| class 5 prefix                             | cultivate    | initial   | 1sg subj    | class 15/5 obj    |  | like          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ‘As for cultivating, I like it.’ {object}  |              |           |             |                   |  |               |  |  |  |  |  |  |

<sup>3</sup> Although the use of class 5 *i-* as an infinitive prefix is found in the Kilimanjaro group of languages (Guthrie’s E60), it is significant that the same prefix is used in other Zone E languages (and possibly beyond) to derive infinitival nouns or nouns with that sense. Consider the Nyambo (E21) examples: *i-rima* ‘cultivation’: *ijenda* ‘journey, going, time/turn’; *i-fa* ‘famine, dying’; *i-saarura* ‘harvest process/season’; *eri-ómbeka* ‘construction, building’.

*ighema lyisha / ighemá kusha*

|                                |              |                 |            |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <i>i-</i>                      | <i>ghema</i> | <i>lyi-/ku-</i> | <i>sha</i> |
| class 5 prefix                 | cultivate    | class 5/15      | good       |
| 'good cultivating' {adjective} |              |                 |            |

*ighema ilya/kulya*

|                                    |              |               |            |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| <i>i-</i>                          | <i>ghema</i> | <i>i-/ku-</i> | <i>lya</i> |
| class 5 prefix                     | cultivate    | class 5/15    | that       |
| 'that cultivating' {demonstrative} |              |               |            |

*ighema koose / lyoose*

|                                |              |                |            |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>i-</i>                      | <i>ghema</i> | <i>ku-/li-</i> | <i>ose</i> |
| class 5 prefix                 | cultivate    | class 15/5     | all        |
| 'all cultivating' {quantifier} |              |                |            |

Even though both prefixes are well-formed, it appears that the *li-* prefix is more popular in current usage and that the *ku-* prefix is disappearing.

The locative expressions are marked by suffixes rather than prefixes. The general suffix is *-ni* with vowel harmony effects on the preceding vowel: [a] always changes to [e] or [i]), but the back vowels do not change. The final vowel on the locative prefix is apparently getting lost.<sup>4</sup>

(22)

| Base noun      | Gloss      | Locative noun          | Gloss                   |
|----------------|------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>ngô</i>     | 'pole'     | <i>ngón</i>            | 'on the pole'           |
| <i>ifumbú</i>  | 'mountain' | <i>ifumbún</i>         | 'in/on/at the mountain' |
| <i>ighiná</i>  | 'hole'     | <i>ighinín/ighinén</i> | 'in hole'               |
| <i>múghâ</i>   | 'water'    | <i>múghen</i>          | 'in water/river'        |
| <i>íghúbhâ</i> | 'lake'     | <i>íghúbhen</i>        | 'in the lake'           |
| <i>shónga</i>  | 'food'     | <i>shóngen</i>         | 'in the food'           |
| <i>nswá</i>    | 'porridge' | <i>nswén</i>           | 'in the porridge'       |
| <i>kítará</i>  | 'bed'      | <i>kítárén</i>         | 'in the bed'            |

A few nouns whose meaning include the feature [+high/elevated] also take *-eu* with special semantic nuances. Note that the back vowel of *ifumbú* does not change in this pattern.

(23)

| Base noun     | Locative noun  | Gloss             |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>ngíná</i>  | <i>ngínéú</i>  | 'high in the sky' |
|               | <i>ngínén</i>  | 'in the sky'      |
| <i>irubhá</i> | <i>irubheú</i> | 'in the heavens'  |

<sup>4</sup> But see Phanael (2006) where the locative suffix is recorded with the vowel.

|                     |                |                    |                |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| i. <i>nghíni</i>    | 'in the tree'  | ii. <i>kighíni</i> | 'on the chair' |
| iii. <i>mughéni</i> | 'in the water' | iv. <i>muríni</i>  | 'in town'      |

|               |                |                           |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|
|               | <i>irubhén</i> | ‘in the clouds/weather’   |
| <i>mmba</i>   | <i>mmbéú</i>   | ‘on the top of the house’ |
| <i>ifumbú</i> | <i>ifumbúú</i> | ‘on the mountain top’     |

Some nouns with the semantic feature [+locative] may not take the locative suffix as the following examples show:

(24)

| Example        | Gloss            |
|----------------|------------------|
| <i>mmbá</i>    | ‘in the house’   |
| <i>mungo</i>   | ‘on the back’    |
| <i>kisangú</i> | ‘on the face’    |
| <i>boo</i>     | ‘home/outside’   |
| <i>ndeú</i>    | ‘on the stomach’ |

There is the possibility that *ndeú* is actually marked for location and comes from a lost *nda*, which exists in other Bantu languages. The well-formed *ndeun* ‘in the stomach’ provides a convenient contrast.

The full set of nominal prefixes and agreement markers are presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Noun Class Concordial Pattern**

| Cl       | Pf.             | Example              | Gloss         | su<br>b            | obj                | adj                | num                 | this                  | that <sup>1</sup> | that <sup>2</sup>      | my                 | con               |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1        | <i>N</i>        | <i>ńndû</i>          | person        | <i>a</i>           | <i>N</i>           | <i>mu</i>          | <i>umwi</i>         | <i>eu</i>             | <i>ito</i>        | <i>ulya</i>            | <i>akwa</i>        | <i>wa</i>         |
| 2        | <i>bh<br/>a</i> | <i>bhándû</i>        | people        | <i>bh<br/>a</i>    | <i>bh<br/>a</i>    | <i>bha</i>         | <i>bhabhi<br/>i</i> | <i>bhand<br/>i</i>    | <i>wand<br/>o</i> | <i>bhaly<br/>a</i>     | <i>bhakw<br/>a</i> | <i>bha</i>        |
| 3        | <i>N</i>        | <i>ng hí</i>         | tree          | <i>u</i>           | <i>u</i>           | <i>mu</i>          | <i>umwi</i>         | <i>eu</i>             | <i>ito</i>        | <i>ulya</i>            | <i>wakwa</i>       | <i>wa</i>         |
| 4        | <i>mi</i>       | <i>migh í</i>        | trees         | <i>i</i>           | <i>i</i>           | <i>mi</i>          | <i>ibhii</i>        | <i>ei</i>             | <i>iyo</i>        | <i>ilya</i>            | <i>yakwa</i>       | <i>ya</i>         |
| 5        | <i>i</i>        | <i>iyáí</i>          | egg           | <i>lyi</i>         | <i>lyi</i>         | <i>lyi</i>         | <i>lyimwi</i>       | <i>ilyi</i>           | <i>ilyo</i>       | <i>lilya</i>           | <i>lyakwa</i>      | <i>lya</i>        |
| 6        | <i>ma</i>       | <i>mayáí</i>         | eggs          | <i>a</i>           | <i>ya</i>          | <i>ma</i>          | <i>abhii</i>        | <i>andi</i>           | <i>ando</i>       | <i>alya</i>            | <i>akwa</i>        | <i>a</i>          |
| 7        | <i>ki</i>       | <i>kíndô</i>         | thing         | <i>ki</i>          | <i>ki</i>          | <i>ki</i>          | <i>kimwi</i>        | <i>iki</i>            | <i>ikyó</i>       | <i>kilya</i>           | <i>kyakwa</i>      | <i>kya</i>        |
| 8        | <i>fi</i>       | <i>fíndô</i>         | things        | <i>fi</i>          | <i>fi</i>          | <i>fi</i>          | <i>fibhii</i>       | <i>ifi</i>            | <i>ifyo</i>       | <i>filya</i>           | <i>fyakwa</i>      | <i>fyá</i>        |
| 9        | <i>N</i>        | <i>mbughû</i>        | goat          | <i>i</i>           | <i>i</i>           | <i>shi</i>         | <i>imwi</i>         | <i>ei</i>             | <i>iyo</i>        | <i>ilya</i>            | <i>yakwa</i>       | <i>ya</i>         |
| 10       | <i>N</i>        | <i>mbughû</i>        | goats         | <i>ti</i>          | <i>ti</i>          | <i>shi/t<br/>i</i> | <i>ibhii</i>        | <i>iti</i>            | <i>ito</i>        | <i>tilya</i>           | <i>takwa</i>       | <i>ta</i>         |
| 10a      | <i>ngi</i>      | <i>ngíbangâ</i>      | swords        | <i>ti</i>          | <i>ti</i>          | <i>shi/t<br/>i</i> | <i>ibhii</i>        | <i>iti</i>            | <i>ito</i>        | <i>tilya</i>           | <i>takwa</i>       | <i>ta</i>         |
| 11       | <i>u</i>        | <i>úbangâ</i>        | sword         | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lumwi</i>        | <i>ilu</i>            | <i>ilo</i>        | <i>lulya</i>           | <i>lwakwa</i>      | <i>lwa</i>        |
| 12       | <i>ka</i>       | <i>kambugh<br/>û</i> | small goat    | <i>ka</i>          | <i>ka</i>          | <i>ka</i>          | <i>kamwi</i>        | <i>aka</i>            | <i>ako</i>        | <i>kalya</i>           | <i>kakwa</i>       | <i>ka</i>         |
| 14       | <i>u</i>        | <i>úndû</i>          | humannes<br>s | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lu</i>          | <i>lumwi</i>        | <i>ilu/elu</i>        | <i>ilo/elo</i>    | <i>lulya</i>           | <i>lwakwa</i>      | <i>lwa</i>        |
| 15/<br>5 | <i>i</i>        | <i>ioghâ</i>         | marrying      | <i>ku/<br/>lyi</i> | <i>ku/<br/>lyi</i> | <i>ku</i>          | <i>lyimwi</i>       | <i>ilyi/<br/>kunu</i> | <i>ilyo</i>       | <i>llya/<br/>kulya</i> | <i>lyakwa</i>      | <i>lya</i>        |
| 16       | <i>a</i>        | <i>ándô</i>          | place         | <i>ku</i>          | <i>ku</i>          | <i>ku</i>          | <i>amwi</i>         | <i>andi</i>           | <i>ando</i>       | <i>alya</i>            | <i>kwakw<br/>a</i> | <i>kwa/<br/>a</i> |

| Cl | Pf.       | Example                           | Gloss   | su<br>b   | obj       | adj       | num          | this        | that <sup>1</sup> | that <sup>2</sup> | my                 | con        |
|----|-----------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 17 | <i>ku</i> | <i>kúndô</i>                      | place   | <i>ku</i> | <i>ku</i> | <i>ku</i> | <i>kumwi</i> | <i>andi</i> | <i>efo</i>        | <i>kulya</i>      | <i>kwakw<br/>a</i> | <i>kwa</i> |
| 18 | -         | <i>mmbéú<br/>nghin<br/>ukuten</i> | on the<br>house, in<br>the tree,<br>on the wall | <i>ku</i> | <i>ku</i> | <i>ku</i> | <i>kumwi</i> | <i>kunu</i> | <i>efo</i>        | <i>kulya</i>      | <i>kwakw<br/>a</i> | <i>kwa</i> |

The foregoing discussion has shown that Mashami does present evidence of continuous shrinking of the noun class system. First, the class for diminutives, i.e. class 12 *ka-* is regarded as dialectal and is seriously endangered; the plural counterpart, class 13, is already lost without trace. In their place, classes 7/8 have stepped in to fill the void. Second, many other Bantu languages still have a few nouns denoting body parts in class 15, besides the infinitives, with a *ku-* prefix (e.g. Nyambo E21: *o-ku-tu* ‘ear’, *o-kw-ahwa* ‘armpit’, *o-ku-ju* ‘knee’, *o-ku-guru* ‘leg’, *o-kw-ezi* ‘moon’). In Mashami and related languages of Kilimanjaro, no noun has a *ku-* prefix, and all the infinitives take the *i-* prefix of class 5. The *ku-* prefix, as shown above, has weak traces in the agreement pattern and is giving way to the class 5 agreement pattern. Third, classes 11 and 14 are almost merging, following the sound changes involving the loss of [l] of the class 11 prefix, and the [b] of the class 14 prefix. This left both classes with a shared [u] nominal prefix. Fourth, there are no noun prefixes for the locative classes 16–18; the *-ni* nominal suffix is used instead, and the variation in the agreement patterns for the locative forms has been considerably reduced with, for example, an invariant *ku-* affix in the subject, object, and adjective columns, as well as identical forms in the possessive pronoun column and the connective column in Table 2. Finally, the treatment of borrowed nouns with no nominal prefix is bringing to the fore the human feature in the assignment of class, so that if a noun does not denote a human it will be assigned to a class other than class 1 or 2, and it does not matter very much what that other class is.

## Noun Derivation

### Noun Derivation by Change of Class Prefix

A noun is usually understood to belong to a particular class in the singular; when the appropriate plural prefix replaces the singular prefix, the change is normally regarded as an inflectional process to mark a number contrast. Beyond that regular contrast, nouns may relocate into other classes to convey various shades of meaning. In the simplest forms, the original prefix is replaced by a prefix from a different class, as in: *n-ríngi* ‘agitator’, and *u-ríngi* ‘betrayal’. In other cases, the original prefix may be retained and the new prefix simply added before it, as in: *mw-anâ* ‘child’, and *ka-mw-anâ* ‘small child’. In the case of the form related to *ń-ndú* ‘person’, even the final vowel of the base noun changes: *kí-ndó* ‘thing’, and *kú-ndô* ‘place’. The meaning relation is even more debatable but appears to point to some metaphysical concept of ‘being’ as centred on humans.

<sup>5</sup> These patterns are not Mashami innovations but may be found in many Bantu languages, e.g. Nyambo: *o-mu-ntu* ‘person’; *a-ba-ntu* ‘people’; *e-ci-ntu* ‘thing’; *e-bi-ntu* ‘things’; *o-bu-ntu* ‘humanness/good naturedness’; *a-ha-ntu* ‘place’.

The more regular semantic nuances concern augmentative and diminutive senses. But such derived forms usually convey senses other than merely physical size, and may be marshaled to capture some pejorative or appreciative nuance. Whether an augmentative or diminutive form is pejorative or appreciative depends on what is conceived as the standard or expected size in a given context – movement from the basic class to a new noun class is sufficient to signal a new nuance. For instance, the augmentative *i-mw-anâ* ‘child’ may carry negative connotations because it is expected that a child will be small; but it could carry positive connotations if it is seen as focusing on some aspect of the health of the child to indicate that the child is growing well and so is above the average child in size. So, in the examples of derivation below, the remarks referring to pejorative and appreciative senses need to be taken in that spirit of relativity.

(25)

| Class | Example                 | Gloss                           | Class | Example         | Gloss                 |
|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1     | <i>nîndû</i>            | ‘person’                        | 1     | <i>nrîngi</i>   | ‘agitator’            |
| 2     | <i>bhânîndû</i>         | ‘persons’                       | 2     | <i>bharîngi</i> | ‘agitators’           |
| 5     | <i>îîndû</i>            | ‘person’<br>(aug./pejorative)   | 5     | <i>irîngi</i>   | ‘agitator’ (aug.)     |
| 6     | <i>mâbhândû</i>         | ‘persons’<br>(pejorative)       | 6     | <i>marîngi</i>  | ‘agitators’<br>(aug.) |
| 7     | <i>kîndô</i>            | ‘thing’                         |       |                 |                       |
| 8     | <i>fîndô</i>            | ‘things’                        | 8     | <i>fîringi</i>  | ‘small<br>agitators’  |
| 12    | <i>kaîndû</i>           | ‘person’ (dim.<br>appreciative) | 12    | <i>karîngi</i>  | ‘small agitator’      |
| 14    | <i>úîndû</i>            | ‘humanness’                     | 14    | <i>urîngi</i>   | ‘betrayal’            |
| 16/17 | <i>ândô /<br/>kúndô</i> | ‘place’                         |       |                 |                       |

(26)

| Class | Example        | Gloss                        | Class | Example         | Gloss                          |
|-------|----------------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | <i>mwanâ</i>   | ‘child’                      | 1     | <i>mbughû</i>   | ‘goat, sheep’                  |
| 2     | <i>bhanâ</i>   | ‘children’                   | 2     | <i>mbughû</i>   | ‘goats, sheep’                 |
| 5     | <i>imwanâ</i>  | ‘child’<br>(aug./pejorative) | 5     | <i>imbughû</i>  | ‘goat’ (aug.<br>pejorative)    |
| 6     | <i>mabhanâ</i> | ‘children’ (aug.<br>pejor.)  | 6     | <i>mambughû</i> | ‘goats’ (aug.)                 |
| 7     | <i>kimwanâ</i> | ‘child’ (dim.)               | 7     | <i>kimbughû</i> | ‘goat’ (dim.<br>pejorative)    |
| 8     | <i>fimwanâ</i> | ‘children’ (dim.)            | 8     | <i>fimbughû</i> | ‘goats’ (dim.<br>pejorative)   |
| 12    | <i>kamwanâ</i> | ‘child’ (dim.<br>apprec.)    | 12    | <i>kambughû</i> | ‘small goat’<br>(dim. apprec.) |

The availability of these patterns creates a room for a lot of variation in the noun class systems of even closely related Bantu languages, and in the speech of individual speakers of particular languages. So, it is quite frequent for particular nouns to belong to more than one singular/plural pair without there being a noticeable difference in meaning. The difference in meaning may have existed and is now lost; or the difference may exist but the person providing the information is not aware of it or regards it as insignificant dialectal/idiolectal variation<sup>6</sup>.

### Derivation by Suffixation

Many nouns are derived from verbs by means of a suffix vowel and an appropriate noun class prefix: it should be noted that the *i-* verbal prefix is itself a class 5 prefix. The tonal pattern from the verb may be retained or modified.

### Derivation Using Suffix -a

It is debatable whether a new suffix does indeed replace the final vowel of the verb stem; it would appear in this case at least that the major process of nominalization is accomplished using the noun class prefix and/or the tonal variation, but leaving the final vowel unchanged. The noun for ‘flour’ has a passive suffix before the derivational vowel.

(27)

| <b>Verb</b>     | <b>Gloss</b>      | <b>Noun</b>         | <b>Gloss</b>                     |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>ighemâ</i>   | ‘to cultivate’    | <i>ghemâ/ighemâ</i> | ‘farm’                           |
| <i>ifwâ</i>     | ‘to die’          | <i>ifwâ</i>         | ‘death’                          |
| <i>ikyâ</i>     | ‘to dawn’         | <i>makyâ</i>        | ‘dawn’                           |
| <i>ikundâ</i>   | ‘to love’         | <i>ikundâ</i>       | ‘love’                           |
| <i>iisa</i>     | ‘to grind’        | <i>nswa</i>         | ‘flour’                          |
| <i>iasâ</i>     | ‘to advise, warn’ | <i>kyaasâ</i>       | ‘agreement’                      |
| <i>í-éng’â</i>  | ‘breathe’         | <i>kyeng’â</i>      | ‘breath’                         |
| <i>isisâ</i>    | ‘disturb’         | <i>kisisâ</i>       | ‘disturbance’                    |
| <i>ítítâ</i>    | ‘burrow’          | <i>kítítâ</i>       | ‘blending stick, type of insect’ |
| <i>íréngétâ</i> | ‘cut’ (tree)      | <i>kirengétâ</i>    | (tree) ‘cutter’                  |
| <i>ilólâ</i>    | ‘look, watch’     | <i>kilólâ</i>       | ‘mirror’                         |

### Derivation Using Suffix -i

This is traditionally labeled the agentive nominalizer, but it is clearly more than agentive, as the examples below show; it replaces the final vowel of the verb; the noun class changes, but the tone is in all these examples unaffected.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the impression one gets when taking a quick look at some dictionaries (Regemalira 2009 & 2013), e.g. Gogo: 9-10 *nghukupani* & 5 *ikukupani* / 6 *makukupani* ‘flea’; 3 *muwoko* / 4 *miwoko* & 5 *iwoko* / 6 *mawoko* ‘arm’; 6 *malamuzi* & 14 *ulamuzi* ‘decision’; Makonde: 11 *lutano*/10 *nnano* & 3 *ntano*/4 *mitano* ‘tale’; 9-10 *nkule* & 5 *likule* / 6 *makule* ‘mouse’; 5 *liceta* / 6 *maceta* & 1a *nanceta* ‘jackal’. Under normal elicitation contexts, it is easy to get these variants, if not from the same person, then from different informants.

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(28)

| <b>Verb</b>    | <b>Gloss</b>   | <b>Noun</b>    | <b>Gloss</b>           |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| <i>ighemâ</i>  | 'to cultivate' | <i>ughemî</i>  | 'agriculture'          |
| <i>ighemâ</i>  | 'to cultivate' | <i>nghemî</i>  | 'farmer'               |
| <i>ibhíngâ</i> | 'to win'       | <i>úbhíngî</i> | 'victory'              |
| <i>ibhíngâ</i> | 'to win'       | <i>m⇔bíngî</i> | 'winner'               |
| <i>ighumâ</i>  | 'to send'      | <i>ghumî</i>   | 'message'              |
|                |                | <i>nghumî</i>  | 'messenger'            |
| <i>igheghâ</i> | 'to talk'      | <i>ugheghî</i> | 'manner of 'speaking'' |
| <i>igheghâ</i> | 'to talk'      | <i>ngheghî</i> | 'speaker'              |
| <i>iéékýâ</i>  | 'to help'      | <i>wéékî</i>   | 'help, aid'            |
| <i>ikundâ</i>  | 'to love'      | <i>ukundî</i>  | 'love'                 |

### Derivation Using Suffix -o

It is significant that the derivations from this suffix do not include nouns for humans. The noun classes are varied and the tonal modifications few.

(29)

| <b>Verb</b>    | <b>Gloss</b>                   | <b>Noun</b>      | <b>Gloss</b>                  |
|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>isiyâ</i>   | 'to come to an end'            | <i>masíyô</i>    | 'end'                         |
| <i>ibhíngâ</i> | 'to win'                       | <i>úbhíngô</i>   | 'judgement'                   |
| <i>iréíya</i>  | 'to write'                     | <i>kiréíyo</i>   | 'document/writing instrument' |
| <i>iasâ</i>    | 'to advise, warn'              | <i>kyaasô</i>    | 'advice'                      |
| <i>igheghâ</i> | 'to talk'                      | <i>igheghô</i>   | 'word'                        |
| <i>ibhabhá</i> | 'to be bitter, to itch'        | <i>mabhábhio</i> | 'pain'                        |
| <i>ílúngâ</i>  | 'to join'                      | <i>ílúngô</i>    | 'joint'                       |
| <i>íghásâ</i>  | 'to make sacrificial offering' | <i>kíghásô</i>   | 'sacrifice'                   |
| <i>isékâ</i>   | 'to laugh'                     | <i>sékô</i>      | 'laughter'                    |
| <i>ighááka</i> | 'to vomit'                     | <i>ughááko</i>   | 'vomit'                       |
| <i>isésâ</i>   | 'to gnaw' (as insect or bird)  | <i>kisésô</i>    | 'grain weevil'                |
| <i>iésâ</i>    | 'to tempt, measure'            | <i>kyéésô</i>    | 'temptation, measurement'     |
| <i>ibáshâ</i>  | 'to sculpture'                 | <i>mbáshô</i>    | 'tiny pieces of wood'         |

### Derivation Using Suffix -u

Here too the tonal modifications are not quite predictable.

(30)

| <b>Verb</b>     | <b>Gloss</b>     | <b>Noun</b>       | <b>Gloss</b>                    |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>ifwá</i>     | 'to die'         | <i>mfú/ufú</i>    | 'dead person/death'             |
| <i>imááma</i>   | 'to urinate'     | <i>imáámu</i>     | 'urine'                         |
| <i>isongóya</i> | 'to lead'        | <i>kisóngóghú</i> | 'leader'                        |
| <i>ifumâ</i>    | 'to dig'         | <i>ifumû</i>      | 'spear'                         |
| <i>íanâ</i>     | 'to thank'       | <i>kyánû</i>      | 'sacrifice'                     |
| <i>yuumâ</i>    | 'to be hard/dry' | <i>muumû</i>      | 'not generous' (esp. with food) |
| <i>ielâ</i>     | 'to winnow'      | <i>muulú</i>      | 'chaff'                         |

### Derivation Using Suffix -e

As with the other suffixes, the classification is varied and the tonal patterns are unpredictable from the verb.

(31)

| <b>Verb</b>      | <b>Gloss</b>                     | <b>Noun</b>       | <b>Gloss</b>                 |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>ikundâ</i>    | 'to love'                        | <i>nkundé</i>     | 'lover'                      |
| <i>ibhabhâ</i>   | 'to be bitter, to itch'          | <i>ibhabhe</i>    | 'leprosy'                    |
| <i>iishíbhya</i> | 'to get accustomed to'           | <i>mishíbhýé</i>  | 'customs'                    |
| <i>úndyâ</i>     | 'to worship'                     | <i>miindyé</i>    | 'mass'                       |
| <i>íkúrâ</i>     | 'to scratch'                     | <i>ikure</i>      | 'food stuff from scratching' |
| <i>isáára</i>    | 'to cut' (e.g. with razor blade) | <i>saré</i>       | 'incision'                   |
| <i>úúsâ</i>      | 'to grind'                       | <i>isewe</i>      | 'grindstone'                 |
| <i>íshéshékâ</i> | 'to sieve'                       | <i>shekesheké</i> | 'sieve'                      |
| <i>ighéngéâ</i>  | 'to slumber'                     | <i>ghwé</i>       | 'sleep'                      |
| <i>ing'anâ</i>   | 'to grow'                        | <i>ming'ányé</i>  | 'upbringing, socialization'  |

### Derivation Using Suffix -ie

The derivation with *-ie* implies mannerism or way/style of doing things (cf. *-ile/-ele* in other Bantu languages). All of the derived nouns are in class 4; the first vowel of the suffix undergoes a gliding process and the tone is unpredictable.

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(32)

| <b>Verb</b>   | <b>Gloss</b> | <b>Noun</b>     | <b>Gloss</b>                        |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>ikorá</i>  | ‘cook’       | <i>mikóryé</i>  | ‘cuisine/manner of cooking’         |
| <i>iénda</i>  | ‘walk’       | <i>mengyé</i>   | ‘behaviour, way of walking’ (d > g) |
| <i>ikundâ</i> | ‘love’       | <i>mikúndyé</i> | ‘way of loving’                     |
| <i>iná</i>    | ‘drink’      | <i>miníyé</i>   | ‘way of drinking’                   |

### Compounding and Reduplication

Noun + Associative + Noun

Compounds that combine two nouns require the associative connector so that the literal semantics is possessive, as in: *kibere kyá ifúbhé* ‘potato of baboon’ = ‘baboon’s potato’. However, the true meaning of the compound cannot, in most cases, be computed from the constituent nouns. In the examples that follow, the English glosses appear below the Mashami terms.

(33)

| <b>Compound noun</b>  | <b>Basic term</b>                       | <b>Modifying term</b>           |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>isálé lyá shófu</i><br>‘alovera’                           | <i>isálé</i><br>‘kind of alovera plant’ | <i>shófu</i><br>‘elephant’      |
| <i>iuwá lyá shókâ</i><br>‘kind of bad smelling flower’        | <i>iuwâ</i><br>‘flower’                 | <i>shókâ</i><br>‘snake’         |
| <i>ighumá lyá múghen</i><br>‘kind of medicinal riverside yam’ | <i>ighumâ</i><br>‘yam’                  | <i>mughen</i><br>‘in the water’ |
| <i>kibere kyá ifúbhé</i><br>‘kind of bitter potato’           | <i>kiberé</i><br>‘potato’               | <i>ifubhé</i><br>‘baboon’       |
| <i>mangí á ndeyé</i><br>‘kind of crowned bird’                | <i>mangí</i><br>‘king’                  | <i>ndeyé</i><br>‘bird’          |

Verb + Noun Compounds

In verb plus noun compounds, the noun is a complement of the verb even though the verb is already in the nominal form with an appropriate noun class prefix.

(34)

| <b>Compound term</b>                                      | <b>Verb</b>                                       | <b>Noun</b>                        |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>ifishá nńdô</i><br>‘kind of plant with hard stem’      | <i>ifishâ</i><br>‘to break’                       | <i>nńdô</i><br>‘sickle’            |
| <i>ibhándá súbhâ</i><br>‘kind of plant with thick leaves’ | <i>bhandâ</i><br>‘to grow fat’                    | <i>súbhâ</i><br>‘ram’              |
| <i>kirinda múndí</i><br>‘fool’                            | <i>rindâ</i><br>‘to seal a crack to stop seepage’ | <i>múndí</i><br>‘wooden container’ |
| <i>kiwambo kughwí</i><br>‘mantis’                         | <i>wambâ</i><br>‘to spread around’                | <i>kughwí</i><br>‘ear’             |
| <i>kitúla itíkó</i>                                       | <i>túlâ</i>                                       | <i>ítíkó</i>                       |

|                               |             |              |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| ‘kind of hard creeping grass’ | ‘to fell’   | ‘zebra’      |
| <i>ibara nungú</i>            | <i>bará</i> | <i>nungú</i> |
| ‘kind of large grasshopper’   | ‘to break’  | ‘pot’        |

### Reduplication

The nouns in the list below are derived via reduplication of the stem. In many cases, the non-reduplicated form is no longer available and it can only be assumed because of the identical parts in the current noun.

(35)

| Noun                |                                       | Gloss   |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>ifarafara</i>    | <i>i-fara-fara</i><br>[onomatopoeic]  | ‘type of edible and medicinal herb that produces some noise when disturbed’ |
| <i>bhyaabhya</i>    | <i>bya-bya</i> tell-tell              | ‘rumor mongering’ (from <i>bhyá</i> ‘tell’)                                 |
| <i>ifwafwá</i>      | <i>i-fwa-fwá</i> die-die              | ‘numbness’ (from <i>fwa</i> ‘die’; cf. Swahili: <i>kifafa</i> ‘epilepsy’)   |
| <i>imbarámbárâ</i>  | <i>i-mbará-mbárâ</i>                  | ‘type of grass’   |
| <i>kibhiribhiri</i> | <i>ki-bhiri-bhiri</i>                 | ‘a whisper, secret meeting, plot, scheme’                                   |
| <i>kifirífirí</i>   | <i>ki-firí-firí</i>                   | ‘jealousy’  |
| <i>mwálúkólúkô</i>  | <i>mw-álúkó-lúkô</i><br>change-change | ‘unreliability/undependability’ (from <i>ialúkâ</i> ‘change’)               |
| <i>sarusáru</i>     | <i>saru-sáru</i>                      | ‘things in shambles’  |
| <i>mbuumbuu</i>     | <i>mbuu-mbuu</i>                      | ‘spider’  |

### Numerals

The derivational potential in the nominal system is further illustrated by the numerals. The names of the numerals are nouns falling in various noun classes; numbers one through six and nine appear with the *ki-/fi-* prefixes of classes 7/8 for counting purposes; one and nine have the singular prefix *ki-* while the rest have the plural *fi-*. *Mfungághé* ‘seven’ is probably in class 3 and *nyanyá* ‘eight’ is probably in class 9. *Ikumí* ‘ten’ is in class 5, with the plural, *makumí*, in class 6. Numeral agreement is marked up to six only, i.e. the prefix on the number word agrees with the class of the noun modified: *bhandu bghándághû* ‘six people’ and not \**bhandu fighándághû*; *bhandu mfungághé* ‘seven people’ and not \**bhandu bhafungághé*. It will be noted that by taking agreement affixes, the numerals for one to six behave like adjectives and other nominal dependents even while they have nominal prefixes. On the other hand, the numerals for seven and above behave like true nouns, best illustrated by the singular and plural forms of *ikumí/makumí* ‘ten/tens’, and *iyánâ/máyánâ* ‘hundred/hundreds’.

**Table 3: Cardinal Numbers**

|   | Ones               | Tens          |                   | Hundreds      |                   |
|---|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>kyímwí</i>      | <i>ikumí</i>  |                   | <i>íyáná</i>  |                   |
| 2 | <i>fibhí</i>       | <i>makumí</i> | <i>ábhí</i>       | <i>mayana</i> | <i>abhí</i>       |
| 3 | <i>figháághû</i>   | <i>makumí</i> | <i>ágháághû</i>   | <i>mayana</i> | <i>ágháághû</i>   |
| 4 | <i>fíinâ</i>       | <i>makumí</i> | <i>áánâ</i>       | <i>mayana</i> | <i>áánâ</i>       |
| 5 | <i>figháánû</i>    | <i>makumí</i> | <i>ágháánû</i>    | <i>mayana</i> | <i>ágháánû</i>    |
| 6 | <i>fighíndághû</i> | <i>makumí</i> | <i>ághíndághû</i> | <i>mayana</i> | <i>ághíndághû</i> |
| 7 | <i>mfungághé</i>   | <i>makumí</i> | <i>mfungághé</i>  | <i>máyáná</i> | <i>mfungághé</i>  |
| 8 | <i>nyanyá</i>      | <i>makumí</i> | <i>nyanyá</i>     | <i>máyáná</i> | <i>nyanyá</i>     |
| 9 | <i>kyeendá</i>     | <i>makumí</i> | <i>kyeendá</i>    | <i>máyáná</i> | <i>kyeendá</i>    |

The ordinal terms are formed by changing the noun class prefix: *lyimwí* 'once' is now in class 5, instead of 7; *kábhí* 'twice' is in class 12, instead of 8. Again, the pattern ends at sixth. From seventh *mara mfungághé* the pattern uses what is probably a borrowed item from Swahili to do the numeral ordering. Again, the patterns in the lower numerals show that the noun class prefixes are indeed participating in what would be regarded as a derivational process.

**Table 4: Ordinal Numbers**

|     |                              |             |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------|
| x1  | <i>lyimwí</i>                | once        |
| x2  | <i>kábhí</i>                 | twice       |
| x3  | <i>kagháághû</i>             | three times |
| x4  | <i>káánâ</i>                 | four times  |
| x5  | <i>kagháánû</i>              | five times  |
| x6  | <i>kaghíndághû</i>           | six times   |
| x7  | <i>mara mfungághé</i>        | seven times |
| x8  | <i>mara nyanyá</i>           | eight times |
| x9  | <i>mara kyeendá</i>          | nine times  |
| x10 | <i>mara ikumí [marekumí]</i> | ten times   |

When the ordinal term modifies a noun, the associative construction is used. The associative form may be *a* or *wa*. The free ordinal already shown above is used except in the case of 'first N' where *mbé/kwánsa* replaces *lyimwí*. Here too it is noted that the ordinal form is indeed a noun since besides its nonimal prefix *ka-* it also fills the position of nouns in the associative structure as shown below.

**Table 5: Numeral as Noun Modifier**

|                  |                               |                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | <i>nndu á mbê/ kwánsa</i>     | first person    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | <i>nndu a kabhí</i>           | second person   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | <i>nndu a kagháághû</i>       | third person    |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a káánâ</i>           | fourth person   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a kagháánû</i>        | fifth person    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a kaghíndághû</i>     | sixth person    |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a mfungághé</i>       | seventh person  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a nyanyá</i>          | eighth person   |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>nndu a kyeendá</i>         | ninth person    |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | <i>nndu a ikumí</i>           | tenth person    |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | <i>nndu a ikumí na lyimwí</i> | eleventh person |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> | <i>nndu a ikumí na kabhí</i>  | twelfth person  |

### Concluding Remarks

Mashami provides a good example of the continuing modification of the grammatical and semantic structure of the noun class system. While the semantics of the system may have been fully transparent in the beginning, with time, variation and change has presented us with a system that appears to be very arbitrary, very much like grammatical gender systems in many languages of the world. There is no strong support for the traditional/popular generalizations of what typically is to be found in a particular class. Yet the underlying semantic motive is still very much alive and gets exploited in creative ways to derive new forms for the lexicon. It is this creativity, based on shifting and expanding world views, that often beats logical analysis. Why, for instance, would '*masimba*' 'rich people' be found in the company of augmentatives with a negative connotation? It may be that the world view behind the derivation is that you cannot get rich without stealing.

The evidence from Mashami also supports the general trends in Bantu languages, that is, the noun class distinctions are being reduced. The question that arises then is why this should be so and whether the opposite is conceivable, viz. the creation of more contrasts so that new noun classes may be introduced in a particular language. There is no reason why new contrasts can't be created. Consider, for instance, the earlier suggestion that the *ngi*-marker for some plural forms of class 11 may be an innovation. If this were to turn out to be the case, then it is conceivable that class 11 would pair, not with 10, but with a new class which some audacious linguist might call class 25 or some such number!

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