

THE MUNUKUTUBA NOUN CLASS SYSTEM

Deborah L. Buchanan

Summer Institute of Linguistics, Congo

The purpose of this article is to describe the vestigial noun class system of Munukutuba, a Bantu language of the Republic of Congo. In Bantu languages, concord is normally established within the noun phrase based on the noun class of the head noun. This concord has completely vanished in Munukutuba (hence the classification as vestigial). What is left is a system of grammatical classes and genders which indicate the singular / plural status of the noun. Despite the lack of concord, the existence of some semantic correlation between the nouns and their classes, along with many instances of shared vocabulary with other Bantu languages, clearly show that Munukutuba belongs to the Bantu language family. This article describes the current state of the Munukutuba noun class system. It also compares Munukutuba to proto-Bantu and Kikongo (a related language), in order to gain a better understanding of the underlying 'roots' of this vestigial system.

Cet article présente une description du système nominal atrophie du munukutuba, une langue bantoue de la République du Congo. Dans les systèmes de classes nominales des langues bantoues, la classe nominale de la tête du syntagme nominal régit l'accord avec les autres constituants du syntagme. En munukutuba, le système s'est atrophié parce que ces accords n'existent plus. Ce qui subsiste est un système de classes et de genres qui montrent si le nom est singulier ou pluriel. Cependant, l'existence de corrélations sémantiques entre le nom et sa classe, et les nombreuses similitudes entre le vocabulaire du munukutuba et celui d'autres langues bantoues, indiquent l'appartenance du munukutuba à la famille des langues bantoues. Cet article décrit le système de classes nominales actuel du munukutuba, et le compare au proto-bantou et au kikongo (une langue bantoue apparentée), afin de mieux comprendre les origines de ce système atrophie.

0. INTRODUCTION

Munukutuba is a Bantu H10 language (Guthrie 1948:50,79). It is the language of wider communication of the southern region of Congo-Brazzaville, from Brazzaville to Pointe Noire. Munukutuba is generally regarded as a simplified form of Kikongo, spoken in Congo-Zaire, Congo-Brazzaville, Cabinda, and Angola.¹ Speakers of Munukutuba refer to it as 'Kikongo', although they recognize that it is not the same as the other more complex Kikongo, which they refer to as 'le vrai Kikongo'—the real Kikongo. The exact beginnings of Munukutuba are unclear. In general, however, it is believed to have developed as a result of extensive contact between the peoples of present day southern Congo-Brazzaville and southwestern Congo-Zaire. This contact was initially due to thriving trade (including but not limited to the slave trade), and later the contact between the native peoples, other African peoples, and Europeans in the building of the Congo-Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville railways.

Welmers (1973) describes the existence of some West African languages where "there are a number of noun prefixes which distinguish singulars and plurals, and which have some semantic correlation, but which do not participate in concordial relationships....The languages in question have lost some of the more complex characteristics of a system more like that of Bantu, and should...be characterized as having 'vestigial' or 'decadent' noun class systems." (p. 184) This description fits the status of Munukutuba exactly. All that remains to distinguish between the noun classes is the noun class prefixes themselves, there being no concord with the rest of the noun phrase or the sentence. The purpose of this article is, first, to describe the vestigial Munukutuba noun class system and, second, to compare it to a fully functional Bantu noun class system. In order to accomplish the second purpose, Munukutuba will be

¹ In 1997, Zaire became the Democratic Republic of Congo, easily confused with the neighboring Republic of Congo, whose capital is Brazzaville. For the sake of clarity, this article refers to the countries as Congo-Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville, respectively.

compared to Kikongo. This comparison will show which parts of the fully functional system were retained in Munukutuba. Munukutuba is an SVO language, as is Kikongo.²

The database for the Munukutuba dictionary, in development by Jean-Pierre Mary, was the basis for the corpus of nouns used in the research for this article. In addition, data at the sentence level was gathered on a one-on-one basis using an active bilingual approach (French/Munukutuba) with Munukutuba speakers. This study included 1592 nouns. Borrowed words and proper nouns were studied apart and are discussed in §2.10.

As with sixty percent of Bantu languages, and characteristic of languages in Zone H, Munukutuba has a five vowel system (Welmers 1973:164; Guthrie 1948:54). These are: **a, e, i, o, u**.

Munukutuba has two tones, high (ˊ) and low (ˋ). A falling tone (ˆ) occurs rarely, on the final syllable. Ninety-three percent of Munukutuba words have the main pattern of a single high tone on the penultimate syllable. 4.6% of the words consist of low tone while 2.5% have other patterns.³

The consonant phonemes are given in (1). The **h** is included in the list though it is derived from /g/ intervocallically.

(1) Munukutuba consonant phonemes

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Stops	p b	t d		k g
Fricatives	f v	s z		[h]
Affricates		ts dz		
Liquids and Glides		l	j	w
Nasals	m	n		
Prenasal stops	mp mf	nt		ŋk
	mb mv	nd		ŋg
Prenasal affricates		ns nz		

1. NOUN CLASS SYSTEM

Munukutuba has eleven noun classes. Odd-numbered classes are singular and even-numbered classes are plural. The table in (2) compares the Munukutuba noun class prefixes to Proto-Bantu (Meeussen 1962:98) and Kikongo (Laman 1912:70). In Munukutuba, noun classes 10 and 13 have merged with noun class 2. More detail is given in the next section. Also, classes 16-18 no longer exist in Munukutuba. The prefixes have been replaced by **na**, which functions as a preposition. Classes 16-18 are shown in the table for the sake of comparison with Proto-Bantu and Kikongo, to show the simplification which has occurred in Munukutuba.

² The author is not intending to prove that Munukutuba was derived from Kikongo. Even if Kikongo is the parent, Munukutuba has also been heavily influenced by other surrounding Bantu languages. The similarities between the noun class systems reflect both languages' Proto-Bantu roots and not necessarily that Munkutuba came from Kikongo.

³ In this article, tone is only marked on words which do not have the predominant tone pattern of one high tone on the penultimate syllable. For these exceptions, high tone is marked on the syllable where it occurs. If there is no high tone, low tone is marked on all syllables.

(2)	Class	Proto-Bantu	Kikongo	Munukutuba / __C / __V
1		mu-	u-	mu- mw-
1a		Ø	Ø	Ø-
2		ba-	ba-	ba-
3		mu-	u-	mu- mw- m-
4		mi-	mi-	mi- mj-
5		i-	di-	di- dj-
6		ma-	ma-	ma- me- m-
7		ki-	ki-	ki- kj-
8		bi-	bi-	bi- bj-
9		N- (ji-)	N- (ji-)	N-
10		N- (ji-)	N- (zi-)	
11		du-	lu-	lu- lw-
13		tu-	tu-	
14		bu-	bu-	bu- bw-
16		pa-	va-	(na)
17		ku-	ku-	(na)
18		mu-	mu-	(na)

1.1 CLASSES AND GENDERS

A gender is a singular/plural grouping of classes. The most common genders in Munukutuba are 1/2, 1a/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/2, and 11/2. Also significant is Class 14 which contains abstract nouns (it is not paired with a singular class). In both Munukutuba and Kikongo, genders 1/2, 3/4, 5/6, and 7/8, and class 14 have essentially maintained the Proto-Bantu prefixes and singular/plural pairing.

- Class 1a is a subdivision of class 1, but with a zero prefix. In Munukutuba, class 1a is made up of three types of words:
- a) regular zero prefix words (which are also zero prefix in other Bantu languages);
 - b) words which were previously part of another class but lost their prefix at some point; and
 - c) borrowed words which do not belong in any other class.

The examples in (3) and (4) are of class 1a regular and lost prefix words, respectively, where the Kikongo and Munukutuba singular classes are compared. Munukutuba plurals are shown in order to clarify the fact that these words are indeed zero prefix. Borrowed words are treated in §2.10.

Class 1a regular zero prefix words. Where there is a zero prefix, the plural prefix is added to the entire singular form.

(3)	Kikongo	Munukutuba	
	Singular (cl 1a)	Singular (cl 1a)	Plural (cl 2)
	Ø-bakala	Ø-bakala	ba-bakala man
	Ø-ta:ta	Ø-ta:ta	ba-ta:ta father
	Ø-tija	Ø-tija	ba-tija fire
	Ø-za:ndu	Ø-za:ndu	ba-za:ndu market

Class 1a ‘lost prefix’ words. (4a), (4b), and (4c) are simple cases of the prefix being lost between Kikongo and Munukutuba. (4d), (4e), (4f), and (4g) are less straightforward. If the underlying forms in Munukutuba are taken as -ntu, -nwa, -mbwa,

and **-nzo**, one can then hypothesize that **ji-** was originally added as the normal prefix for a class 9 (**N-**) word. At some point, however, this **ji** was no longer treated as a class 9 prefix, but as zero, as evidenced by the plural form prefix **ba-**. Also, the **N-** prefix in (4f) and (4g) was not dropped. It was retained in the word, but lost its function as a prefix.⁴

(4)	Kikongo		Munukutuba		
	Singular	Class	Sing. (cl 1)	Plural (cl 2)	
a	m-le:ke	1	Ø-le:ki	ba-le:ki	younger brother / sister
b	m-kuluntu	1	Ø-kuluntu	ba-kuluntu	adult
c	n-ke:nto	9	Ø-ke:nto	ba-ke:nto	woman
d	mu-tu	3	Ø-jintu	ba-jintu	head
e	mu-nwa	3	Ø-jinwa	ba-jinwa	mouth
f	m-bwa	9	Ø-jimbwa	ba-jimbwa	dog
g	n-zo	9	Ø-jinzo	ba-jinzo	house

Genders 9/2 and 11/2. Classes 10 and 13 have merged with class 2 in Munukutuba. The result is genders 9/2 and 11/2 as opposed to 9/10 and 11/13 in Kikongo. Note that as with gender 1a/2, the plural prefix does not replace the singular prefix. Rather, it is added onto the entire singular form as shown in (5).

(5)	Singular	Plural	Gender	
	m-bo:mbo	ba-mbo:mbo	9/2	nose
	n-deke	ba-ndeke	9/2	bird
	lu-bota	ba-lubota	11/2	crutch
	lu-bendébende	ba-lubendébende	11/2	swallow

Based on the merger of classes 10 and 13 with class 2, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the **ba-** prefix is becoming the standard plural prefix in the mind of the Munukutuba speaker. Further evidence of this exists in spoken Munukutuba, where the prefix **ba-** is often added onto already plural words, probably reflecting an idea similar to the plural article in French. For example, one will often hear **ba ba:na** instead of **ba:na** for 'children', and **ba ba:ntu** instead of **ba:ntu** for 'people'. Additionally, for words or ideas for which the plural is not often used, the Munukutuba speaker will usually use plural class 2. For example, **mubu** 'ocean (cl 3)', does not have a plural, because people of the past knew of only one ocean. If pressed for the plural 'oceans' today, the speaker is more likely to decide on **bamubu** (cl 2) than **mibu** (cl 4). Additionally, an examination of the plural classes reveals that the vast majority (approximately 68%) have plurals beginning with **b**. This could also be used as evidence to indicate the tendency in the mind of the speaker for a plural prefix beginning with **b-**. It could also account for the continuing strength of gender 7/8, in which essentially no merging with class 2 has occurred.

Classes 16, 17, and 18. The three Proto-Bantu and Kikongo locatives have been reduced to one in Munukutuba: **na**. As previously noted, this no longer functions as a prefix but as a preposition.

⁴ It could be argued that words such as **jimbwa** and **jinzo** should be in gender 9/2 in Munukutuba, as the **N-** prefix was not actually dropped and because these words clearly came out of class 9. As the current form in Munukutuba has an initial syllable which does not resemble any Munukutuba prefix, however, for the sake of simplicity and consistency the decision was made to treat such words as class 1a. The same logic has been used throughout this study for deciding which class words belong in. Words are placed in classes according to their current Munukutuba prefix, regardless of knowledge of historically different forms which would place them in other classes.

1.2 FREQUENT GENDERS

Examples of the most frequent genders are given in (6).

(6) Gender 1 / 2	mu:-ntu person mu-kulu ancestor	ba:-ntu people ba-kulu ancestors	mw-a:na child mu-bo:ngô: pygmie	ba-ana children ba-bo:ngô: pygmies
Gender 1a / 2	Ø-jinzo house Ø-fufú rat	ba-jinzo homes ba-fufú rats	Ø-ke:nto woman Ø-boloko prison	ba-ke:nto women ba-boloko prisons
Gender 3 / 4	mù-sàpì finger mu-fwi:di widow(er)	mì-sàpì fingers mi-fwi:di widows(ers)	m-o:ngo mountain mu-ndele white person	mj-o:ngo mountains mi-ndele white people
Gender 5 / 6	di-ba:nza idea di-ba palm tree	ma-ba:nza ideas ma-ba palm trees	di-iki (/di:ki/) egg dy-onga arrow	me-iki (/me:ki/) eggs ma-dyonga arrows ⁵
Gender 7 / 8	ki-bodi lip ki:-ma thing	bi-bodi lips bi:-ma things	ki-bulu animal ki-bo:ba old person	bi-bulu animals bi-bo:ba old people
Gender 9 / 2	n-ga:ndu crocodile m-ba:nza city	ba-nga:ndu crocodiles ba-mba:nza cities	m-bàndà rival m-ba:ngi witness	bà-mbàndà rivals ba-mba:ngi witnesses
Gender 11 / 2	lu-bota crutch lu-dimi tongue	ba-lubota crutches ba-ludimi tongues	lu-kanu law lu-kaka anteater	ba-lukanu laws ba-lukaka anteaters

1.3 INFREQUENT GENDERS

Infrequent genders also exist, accounting for only the nine nouns in (7).

(7) Gender 1a/6	Ø-zulu sky, heaven Ø-fu:nda thousand	ma-zulu heavens ma-fu:nda thousands	Ø-tu:tu flute Ø-se:se desert	ma-tu:tu flutes ma-se:se deserts
Gender 3/2	mw-a:nza shed / hut mw-angusulu transmission	ba-mwa:nza sheds / huts ba-mwangusulu transmissions	mw-i:la stream	ba-mwi:la streams

⁵ This is an exceptional case, as the singular prefix is maintained in the plural form, the plural prefix being added onto the entire singular form.

Gender 7/2	ki:-ti bench	ba-ki:ti benches
Gender 7/6	ki-nswe:ki secret	ma-nswe:ki secrets

1.4 SINGULAR FORM NOUNS

Some nouns have a singular form only (no plural form) as shown in (8).

(8) Class 1a	Ø-bèkà liver disease Ø-tija fire	Ø-fùndù-fùndù dust Ø-lo:so rice
Class 3	mu-bu ocean mu-vu:su disorder	mu:-ngwa salt mu:-lulu nosebleed
Class 5	dj-a:mba marijuana	
Class 7	ki-bakala courage ki-swe:swe mucus	kì-lèngì joy ki-mpu:mpa virginity
Class 9	m-basi tomorrow m-bo:ngo money	m-funu importance / value m-balukulu flips
Class 11	lu-le:ndo arrogance lu-fifini gums	lu-ta:ngu number lu-butu progeny

1.5 PLURAL FORM NOUNS

Some nouns have a plural form only (no singular form). All of the class 14 nouns fall into this category. Some examples are given in (9).

(9) Class 4	mi:-ka fur mì-sò:ngò labor pains	mi:-sa venom mj-a:kâ: itch
Class 6	ma-buta fertility ma-didi cold temperature	ma-lo:ngi advice ma-nte saliva
Class 8	bi-lusu vomit bi-mpojila stupidities	bì-làngà fields bi-ki:nda cemetery

Class 14	bu-ke:nto femininity bu-su:mbu danger	bu-mputu poverty bu-le:mvo grace
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1.6 DISTRIBUTION OF NOUNS IN CLASSES AND GENDERS

The list in (10) illustrates the distribution of the 1592 nouns used in this study into each class and gender in Munukutuba.

(10)	Class 2 (ba-)	Class 4 (mi-)	Class 6 (ma-)	Class 8 (bi-)	One Class (no pairing)	TOTAL
Class 1 (mu-)	9					9
Class 1a (Ø-)	94		4		27	125
Class 2 (ba-)						—
Class 3 (mu-)	3	143			15	161
Class 4 (mi-)					7	7
Class 5 (di-)			140		1	141
Class 6 (ma-)					51	51
Class 7 (ki-)	1		1	445	32	479
Class 8 (bi-)					6	6
Class 9 (N-)	408				58	466
Class 11 (lu-)	64				27	91
Class 14 (bu-)					56	56
TOTAL	579	143	145	445	280	1592

From this data we can make the following observations: Gender 7/8 is the largest gender (as in Kikongo), with gender 9/2 a close second, and the most common plural form is class 2, which would be far from the case if not for the merging of classes 10 and 13 with it.

2. MUNUKUTUBA STRUCTURES

2.1 DEMONSTRATIVE STRUCTURES

There are three demonstratives in Munukutuba. They are distinguished by the proximity of the object to the speaker: very close (within reach), further away, and not present. In Kikongo, the demonstrative prefix varies in accordance with the noun class of the subject. The Munukutuba demonstratives may have come out of class 9 (based on the **ja** and **ji** in the Munukutuba forms), but this is not certain. The loss of concord in Munukutuba makes it difficult to identify the associated class.

(11)	Kikongo (for gender 9/10)	Munukutuba	
	ji- / zi-	ja:ji	this
	jo- / zo-	jina	that
	-	jangó	the one(s) in question
	ji-nee / zi-nee	-	that (way over there)

Near demonstrative. The near demonstrative is **jaji**, used when the subject is very close as shown in (12).⁶

⁶ Abbreviations used in this article are: AM - associative marker; cl # - noun class; DEM - demonstrative; IMP - nonhuman personal pronoun; INTER - interrogative; LOC - locative; NEG - negative; QUANT - quantifier; REL - relative marker; V - vowel.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (12) mu:-ntu jaji
cl ¹ -person DEM
this person | ba:-ntu jaji
cl ² -people DEM
these people |
| Ø-jinti jaji
cl ¹ -tree DEM
this tree | ba-jinti jaji
cl ² -trees DEM
these trees |

Far demonstrative. The far demonstrative is **jina**, used when the subject is further away as shown in (13).

- | | |
|---|---|
| (13) di-me:me jina
cl ⁷ -goat DEM
that goat | ma-me:me jina
cl ⁸ -goats DEM
those goats |
|---|---|

Demonstrative for an object which is not present. The demonstrative to identify an object which is being discussed but is not in view (either because it is removed in time or space) is **jango** as shown in (14).

- | | |
|--|---|
| (14) mu-jibi jango
cl ³ -robber DEM
the robber in question | mi-jibi jango
cl ⁴ -robbers DEM
the robbers in question |
|--|---|

2.2 LOCATIVE STRUCTURE

The locative in Munukutuba acts as a preposition rather than a prefix. As in Kikongo, there is no concord with the noun phrase or sentence. The major locatives in Munukutuba are given in (15) with the correlating elements in Kikongo for comparison.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| (15) Kikongo | Munukutuba | |
| ku, mu | nà | to, at, in, from, on |
| va zulu | nà Ø-zulu | on top of, over (Ø-zulu (cl 1a) = sky, heaven) |
| va / ku nsi | nà Ø-jinsi | on the ground, under (Ø-jinsi (cl 1a) = ground, earth) |
| ku manima | nà manima | in back of, behind, after |
| ku ntwa:la | nà mantwa:la | in front of, ahead of, before |
| kuna | kuna | there |

Note: In (15), only **zulu** and **jinsi** are nouns in Munukutuba. **manima** and **mantwa:la** can not be said unless in combination with the locative **na** as in (16).

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (16) mù ké nà kukwe:nda | nà Ø-za:ndu |
| 1s am going (PRES PROG) | LOC cl ¹ -a-market |
| I am going to the market. | |

ja:ndi kele	nà Ø-bwa:la
3s is (PRES)	LOC cl ¹ -a-village
He is at (in) the village.	

ja:ndi ké salaka	nà ki-be:si
3s works (PRES HAB)	LOC cl ⁷ -hoe
He works with a hoe.	

ma-dja kele	nà zulu	jà Ø-me:sa
cl ⁶ -food is (PRES)	LOC on ^{top}	AM cl ¹ -a-table
The food is on (top of) the table.		

Ø-jimbwa kele	nà jinsi	jà Ø-me:sa
cl ¹ -a-dog is (PRES)	LOC under	AM table
The dog is under the table.		

mw-a:na kele nà manima jà Ø-jinzo
 cl¹-child is (PRES) LOC behind AM cl^{1a}-house
 The child is behind the house.

ja:ndi tambulaka nà mantwa:la jà munu
 3s walked (PAST) LOC before AM 1s
 He walked ahead of me.

ma:ma kele kuna
 mother is (PRES) LOC[^]there
 Mother is over there.

2.3 ASSOCIATIVE STRUCTURES

The associative marker links the noun with another constituent to form a relationship. This phrase structure is very common in Munukutuba and is used for linking nouns modified by nouns, pronouns, and possessives. It should be noted here that Munukutuba does not have 'real' adjectives which directly modify nouns but rather the equivalent of an adjective is created by a noun modifying another noun. Thus, one cannot say, for instance, 'a pretty woman', but must instead say 'a woman of beauty'.

Munukutuba has only one associative marker, **ja**, shown in (17), which is the associative marker for class 9 in Kikongo.

(17) **mu-kila jà di-kaku**
 cl²-tail AM cl⁵-monkey
 the monkey's tail

mw-a:na jà ida
 cl¹-child AM Ida
 Ida's child

ba-ke:nto jà ki-toko
 cl²-women AM cl⁷-beauty
 beautiful women

ba:-ntu jà n-golo
 cl²-people AM cl⁹-strength
 strong people

2.4 INTERROGATIVE

The interrogative in Munukutuba is **wapi**. Lingala, a Bantu language widely used in Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Zaire, also uses the interrogative **wapi**. None of the interrogatives in Kikongo resemble **wapi** as seen in (18).

(18) **wapi mw-e:lo**
 INTER cl³-door
 Which door?

wapi ma:-mbu
 INTER cl⁶-problems
 What's the problem (matter)?

wapi mu-ti:ndu
 INTER cl³-fashion/way
 How?

wapi (ki)-sika
 INTER cl⁷-place
 Where?

2.5 RELATIVE MARKER

The relative marker in Munukutuba is **jina**. It directly follows the subject and is invariable. In Kikongo, the relative marker for class 9 is also **jina**.

(19) **n-kosi jina vwa:ndaka kudja** **ba:-ntu**
 cl⁹-lion REL was eating (PAST PROG) cl²-people
 the lion which was eating people

di-kaku jina mè ki:ma nà m-fi:nda
 cl⁵-monkey REL escaped (REC PAST) LOC cl⁹-forest
 the monkey which escaped into the forest

ma-dja jina Ø-ke:nto jina ké nà kula:mba
 cl⁶-food REL cl^{1a}-woman DEM is preparing (PRES PROG)
 the food which that woman is preparing

2.6 QUANTIFIERS

As shown in (20), Munukutuba quantifiers closely match Kikongo class 9 quantifiers. They are not affected by the noun, and are therefore invariable. Examples of the quantifiers are given in (21).

- (20) Kikongo class 9 Munukutuba
- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| j-onso | njonso | all |
| m-i:ngi | mi:ngi | lots, much |
| ja-nene | nene | big, large |
| ja-fjo:ti | fjo:ti | small, little |
| ja-mvi:mba | muvi:mba | whole |
| n-da:mbu | nda:mbu | part, half |
| m-wa | mwa | a little bit, some |
- (21) **ma-mpa** **njonso** **kj-a:di** **mi:ngi**
 cl⁶-bread (loaves) QUANT cl⁷-sadness QUANT
 all the bread much sadness
- Ø-bakala jà nene** **Ø-bakala jà fjo:ti**
 cl^{1a}-man AM QUANT cl^{1a}-man AM QUANT
 a large man, a fat man a small man, a thin man
- Ø-jinti jà muvi:mba** **nda:mbu jà Ø-jinti**
 cl^{1a}-tree AM QUANT QUANT AM cl^{1a}-tree
 the whole tree part of the tree
- mwà ma-za** **mwà ba:-ntu**
 QUANT cl⁶-water QUANT cl¹-people
 a little bit of water a few people

2.7 NUMERALS

In Kikongo, the numbers 1-6 have a prefix in concord with the noun, while 7-10 are invariable. A comparison of the numbers 1-6 in Kikongo and Munukutuba shows that the closest match is with class 10. We conclude, therefore, that the numbers 1-6 in Munukutuba probably came out of class 10. The numbers 7-10 are also very similar to the Kikongo. The numbers are given in (22) and examples of their usage are given in (23).

- (22) Kikongo class 10 Munukutuba Number
- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----|
| Ø-mosi | mosi | 1 |
| z-ole | zole | 2 |
| Ø-tatu | tatu | 3 |
| Ø-ia | jija | 4 |
| Ø-tanu | tanu | 5 |
| Ø-sambanu | sambanu | 6 |
| nsambwadi | sambwadi | 7 |
| nana | nana | 8 |
| vwa | jivwa | 9 |
| kumi | kumi | 10 |

- (23)

di-nkondi

mosi

cl⁵-banana

one

one banana

ma-nkondi

Ø-kumi

cl⁶-bananas

cl¹a-ten

ten bananas

ba-mbisi

ma-kumi

tatu

cl²-fish

cl⁶-tens

three

thirty fish

ma-meme

ma-funda

sambwadi

cl⁸-sheep

cl⁶-thousands

seven

seven thousand sheep

mj-elo

n-kama

nana

na

jivwa

cl⁴-doors

cl⁹-hundred

eight

and

nine

eight hundred nine doors

2.8 NONHUMAN PERSONAL PRONOUN

In a context where a particular thing (nonhuman, animate or inanimate, concrete or abstract) is understood, the noun phrase can be replaced by the nonhuman personal pronoun. The English equivalents are ‘it’, ‘they’, and ‘them’. In (24), Kikongo class 9 is used for comparison as it is the closest to Munukutuba, although there is not enough evidence to say whether or not the Munukutuba came from the Kikongo. In Kikongo the subject is dropped, the pronoun being implied from the concord in the rest of the phrase. Examples of their usage are given in (25).

- (24)

Kikongo (class 9)

Subject

Object

-

jo

Munukutuba

Subject

Object

ja

jawu
- (25)

mi-kila

ja

ba-jimbwa

cl⁴-tails

AM

cl²-dogs

are wagging (PRES PROG)

The dog’s tails are wagging.

ja

ké nà kuningana

IMP

are wagging (PRES PROG)

They are wagging.

di-kaku

julukaka

ba-jinti

jina

cl⁵-monkey

climbed (PAST)

cl²-trees

DEM

The monkey climbed those trees.

di-kaku

julukaka

jawu

cl⁵-monkey

climbed (PAST)

IMP

The monkey climbed them.

2.9 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Munukutuba personal pronouns are invariable, with the exception that the first-person and third-person singular pronouns have a subject and an object class. There is no concord between the personal pronoun and the rest of the noun phrase or sentence. On the other hand, the Kikongo personal pronouns and personal pronoun prefixes are very complex, particularly for the singular persons. For simplicity, only the Kikongo emphatic pronouns, which are very similar to Munukutuba, are presented in (26). Examples are given in (27).

- | (26) Kikongo | | Munukutuba | | | |
|--------------|--------|------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Sing | Plural | Singular | | Plural | |
| Emphatic | | Subject | Object / Emphatic | Subject | Object / Emphatic |
| mono | beto | mu | munu | beto | beto |
| ngeje | beno | nge | nge | beno | beno |
| jandi | bawu | jandi | jandi | ba | bawu |

(27) **mu ké nà kudja**
 1s am eating (PRES PROG)
 I am eating.

ni munu
 it^is 1s
 It's me.

ngè mè seka
 2s laughed (REC PAST)
 You laughed.

ni ngè
 it^is 2s
 It's you.

jandi vwandaka lala
 3s was sleeping (PAST PROG)
 He was sleeping.

ni jandi
 it^is 3s
 It's him.

beto mè kuwa
 1p heard (REC PAST)
 We heard (understood).

ni beto
 it^is 1p
 It's us.

beno mè simba jawu
 2p grabbed (REC PAST) it
 You grabbed it.

ni beno
 it^is 2p
 It's you.

ba fundaka munu
 3p accused (PAST) 1s
 They accused me.

ni bawu
 it^is 3p
 It's them.

jandi talaka munu
 3s saw (PAST) 1s
 He saw me.

munu mu zola kukwenda
 1s 1s want to go (SUBJUNC)
 Me, I want to go.

jandi mè bula ngè
 3s hit (REC PAST) 2s
 He hit you.

ngè ngè zola kukwiza
 2s 2s want to come (SUBJUNC)
 You, you want to come.

jandi ké fidisa munu
 3s will send (FUT) 1s
 He will send me.

jandi jandi zola jawu
 3s 3s likes (PRES) it
 Him, he likes it.

beto ké pesa jandi m-bongo
 1p will give (FUT) 3s cl^9-money
 We will (are going to) give him money.

beto beto mè dasuka
 1p 1p were angry (REC PAST)
 Us, we got mad.

ja mè simba beno
 it grabbed (REC PAST) 2p
 It grabbed you.

beno beno zaba ve
 2p 2p know (PRES) NEG
 You, you don't know.

mu fundaka bawu
 1s accused (PAST) 3p
 I accused them.

bawu ba zimbanaka
 3p 3p forgot (PAST)
 Them, they forgot.

2.10 BORROWED WORDS

Out of one hundred and fifty-two words of European origin (not counting proper nouns), one hundred and forty-two are thought to be borrowed from French.⁷ The few remaining were borrowed from English, Portuguese, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, these last three being the source of some religious vocabulary.

⁷ The author does not claim that this accounts for all European loan words in Munukutuba, or that the actual origin of the word is the same as the language it was borrowed from. For example, a word borrowed into Munukutuba from French could well have been borrowed itself into French from another language. Both the author's lack of knowledge of other languages and changes in the Munukutuba forms from the original could contribute to some European origin words not being recognized as such.

The data in (28) show borrowed words that have a first syllable in the original language which is the same as (or close to) a Munukutuba prefix. In most such cases, this is treated as a noun class prefix and thus determines the gender of the word.⁸

(28) Munukutuba		Gender	French (source language)	
Singular	Plural			
mu-nda:ji	mi-nda:ji	3/4	<i>médaille</i>	medal
mu-ni:ti	mi-ni:ti	3/4	<i>minute</i>	minute
mu-zi:ka	mi-zi:ka	3/4	<i>musique</i>	music
mw-a:su	mj-a:su	3/4	<i>morceau</i>	piece, slice
di-pandá		5	<i>indépendence</i>	independence
ki-dó	bi-dó	7/8	<i>bidon</i>	water holder
ki-mpe:nzi	bi-mpe:nzi	7/8	<i>chimpanzé</i>	chimpanzee
ki-ni:ni	bi-ni:ni	7/8	<i>quinine</i>	quinine tablet
ki-sikiti	bi-sikiti	7/8	<i>biscuit</i>	cookie
	bi-gudí	8	<i>bigudi</i>	hair roller
m-asini	ba-masini	9/2	<i>machine</i>	train
m-e:ta	ba-me:ta	9/2	<i>mètre</i>	meter
n-ivaki:ni	ba-nivaki:ni	9/2	<i>nivaquine</i>	nivaquine (anti-malarial)
n-o:ti	ba-no:ti	9/2	<i>note</i>	note, grade
lu-ko:lo	ba-luko:lo	11/2	<i>l'école</i>	the school
lu-pita:lu	ba-lupita:lu	11/2	<i>l'hôpital</i>	the hospital
lu-sa:nse		11/2	<i>l'essence</i>	the gasoline

A few cases exist, given in (29), where borrowed words are treated as zero prefix even though their first syllable is like a Munukutuba class prefix.

(29) Munukutuba		Expected gender	Actual gender	French (source language)	
Singular	Plural				
ki-limá	ba-kilimá	7/8	7/2	<i>climat</i>	climate
ki-ló	ba-kiló	7/8	7/2	<i>kilo</i>	kilogram
ki-lométele	ba-kilométele	7/8	7/2	<i>kilomètre</i>	kilometer
mv-we:la	ba-mvwe:la	3/4	3/2	<i>voile</i>	veil
	bi-ne:ti	cl 9 or 2	cl 8	<i>lunettes</i>	eye glasses

Borrowed words with a first syllable not approximating any of the Munukutuba noun class prefixes have also been adopted into various classes. Some examples are given in (30).

(30) Munukutuba		Gender	French (source language)	
Singular	Plural			
n-galasi	ba-ngalasi	9/2	<i>glace</i>	ice cream
di-felo		5	<i>enfer</i>	hell
di-buku	ma-buku	5/6	n/a source: Eng.	book
Ø-buku	ma-buku	1a/6	n/a source: Eng.	ID card
ki-sa:ntu		7	<i>sainte</i>	holy

⁸ Due to the lack of a concord system in Munukutuba, the borrowed words placed in genders 9/2 and 11/2 could just as easily be placed in 1a/2, there being no difference in the plural form and, therefore, no proof that these borrowed words have actually been adopted into their respective genders. For the sake of consistency, however, we have assumed that borrowed words beginning with N- or lu- fall uniformly into genders 9/2 and 11/2.

ki-be:ni	bi-be:ni	7/8	benne	dump truck
ki-be:si	bi-be:si	7/8	bêche	hoe
ki-bilikí	bi-bilikí	7/8	brique	brick
ki-felele	bi-felele	7/8	fleur	flower
ki-pe:lo	bi-pe:lo	7/8	pelle	pail
ki-zama	bi-zama	7/8	examen	exam
	bu-dokoto:lo	14	médecine	medicine
	bu-sa:ntu	14	sainteté	holiness

The majority of borrowed words do not have first syllables which resemble a Munukutuba noun class prefix. Other than those in (30), these borrowed words are placed in gender 1a/2 as shown in (31).

(31) Munukutuba		French (source language)	
Singular	Plural		
Ø-fo:ti	ba-fo:ti	faute	mistake
Ø-ga:le	ba-ga:le	gare	train station
Ø-kalasi	ba-kalasi	classe	class
Ø-ladjó	ba-ladjó	radio	radio
Ø-peli:ke	ba-peli:ke	perruque	wig
Ø-sodá	ba-sodá	soldat	soldier
Ø-takisí	ba-takisí	taxi	taxi
Ø-tomabi:lu	ba-tomabi:lu	automobile	automobile
Ø-vo:ti	ba-vo:ti	vote, élection	vote, election
Ø-zu:zi	ba-zu:zi	juge	judge

2.11 PROPER NOUNS AND PERSONAL NAMES

Proper nouns function in the same way as regular nouns. For example, **mu-popó**, **ba-popó** 'Beninese' is gender 1/2; **lù-ngàdì**, **bà-lùngàdì** 'Muslim(s)' is gender 11/2.

Personal names are pluralized using the prefix **ba-** as in Kikongo, to indicate that you are speaking of the individual and the group of people s/he is with. For example, to indicate that you are speaking about 'John and the people he is with' you would say **ba-Zá** 'the Johns'.

2.12 NOUN CLASS SEMANTIC CONTENT

As is common in Bantu languages, semantic correlation can be seen between certain genders and groups of words. Gender 1/2 contains only human reference nouns. Liquids are usually in class 6 (gender 5/6 if countable). Paired body parts are also usually in gender 5/6. Class 14 contains only abstract nouns. Although other Bantu languages have semantic correlation between animal names and gender, this is not the case in Munukutuba, where animal names can be found in all genders except 1/2.

Human reference nouns. Gender 1/2 contains only human reference nouns with all nine listed in (32). All other genders, except 11/2, also contain human reference nouns.

(32) Munukutuba		Gender	
Singular	Plural		
mu:-ntu	ba:-ntu	1/2	human being
mu-bo:ngô:	ba-bo:ngô:	1/2	pygmy
mú-mbinga	bá-mbinga	1/2	pygmy

mu-klisto	ba-klisto	1/2	Christian
mù-ndìmì	bà-ndìmì	1/2	believer
mu-ndo:ngo	ba-ndo:ngo	1/2	slave
mw-a:na	ba-ana	1/2	child
mw-anánkasi	ba-nánkasi	1/2	niece, nephew
mu-kulu	ba-kulu	1/2	ancestor
Ø-bakala	ba-bakala	1a/2	man
Ø-bokiló	ba-bokiló	1a/2	father / son-in-law
mu-ndeke	mi-ndeke	3/4	white person
mu-kasi	mi-kasi	3/4	spouse
dì-tòkò	mà-tòkò	5/6	young man
di-pasa	ma-pasa	5/6	twin
ki-bo:ba	bi-bo:ba	7/8	old person
ki-buti	bi-buti	7/8	parent
m-fu:mbi	ba-mfu:mbi	9/2	albino
n-twe:nja	ba-ntwe:nja	9/2	young person

Liquids. In most cases, liquids belong to gender 6 or 5/6 (where countable). Examples are given in (33).

(33) Munukutuba		Gender	
Singular	Plural		
	ma-za	6	water
dì-bètè	mà-bètè	5/6	water drop
	ma-suba	6	urine
	ma-luma, ma-jita	6	semen, sperm
	ma-nte	6	saliva
di-nsangaza	ma-nsangaza	5/6	tears
	ma-lafu	6	alcohol, beverage
	ma-finja	6	pus
	ma-futa	6	oil
	me:-nga	6	blood
ki-swa:su		7	mucus

Paired body parts. The majority of paired body parts are found in gender 5/6 as shown in (34).

(34) Munukutuba		Gender	
Singular	Plural		
di-boko	ma-boko	5/6	hand, elbow, arm
di-kulu	ma-kulu	5/6	foot, leg
di:-su	mi:-su, me:-so	5/6	eye
di-kutu	ma-kutu	5/6	ear
di-ge:mbo	ma-ge:mbo	5/6	shoulder
di-bu:ndi	ma-bu:ndi	5/6	cheek
di-be:ne	ma-be:ne	5/6	breast
di-bu:nda	ma-bu:nda	5/6	thigh
di-du:ngú	ma-du:ngú	5/6	testicle
di-koto	ma-koto	5/6	knee
di-taku	ma-taku	5/6	buttock
mu-kika	mi-kika	3/4	eyebrow
m-bo:mbo	ba-mbo:mbo	9/2	nostril (also nose)
lu-keto	ba-luketo	11/2	hip

Animals. Animals are found in all genders (except 1/2). The majority are in 5/6, 7/8, and 9/2, as shown in (35).

(35) Munukutuba		Gender	
Singular	Plural		
Ø-fufú	ba-fufú	1a/2	rat
Ø-ka:nza	ba-ka:nza	1a/2	cobra
mu-bakû:	mi-bakû:	3/4	fox
mù-dùmà	mì-dùmà	3/4	mamba (type of snake)
di-kuti	ma-kuti	5/6	owl
di-kaku	ma-kaku	5/6	monkey
ki-bubu	bi-bubu	7/8	gorilla
ki-mbadja	bi-mbadja	7/8	viper
m-bòmà	bà-mbòmà	9/2	python
n-gulu	ba-ngulu	9/2	pig
lu-kaka	ba-lukaku	11/2	anteater
lu-ngwe:nja	ba-lungwe:nja	11/2	chameleon

Abstract nouns. Class 14 contains only abstract nouns, which also occur in other classes, as given in (36).

(36) Munukutuba		Class	
bu-zitu	14	respect	
bu-nza:mbi	14	divinity	
bu-mwa:na	14	childhood	
bù-bòlò	14	physical weakness	
Ø-lewo	1a	insolence	
Ø-ketiketî:	1a	doubt	
mu-le:mvo	3	pardon	
mu-nimi	3	selfishness	
mj-a:ngu	4	meanness	
ma-njo:ngi	6	sadness	
ma-talaná	6	arrogance	
ki-bakala	7	courage	
kì-lèngì	7	joy	
n-dwe:nga	9	wisdom	
n-gitukulu	9	astonishment	
lù-kòkòtò	11	greed	
lu-fuma	11	resentment	

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