

‘Ropes of potatoes’ – the (incipient) numeral classifier system of Icheve (Tivoid, Cameroon)



“Fruits of potatoes” (Evand)



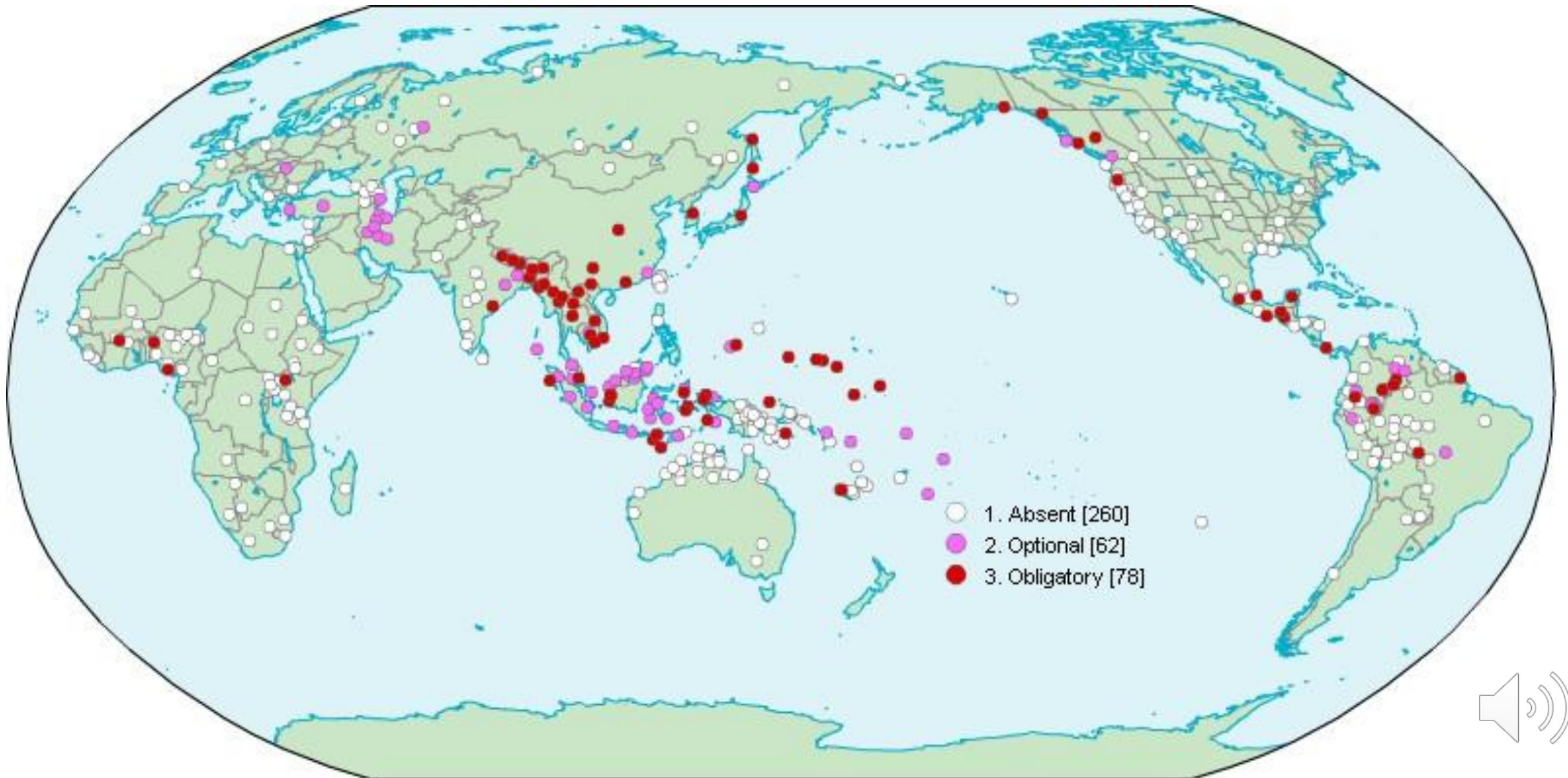
“Muscles of mussels” (Ugare)



„Persons of bees“ (Tiv)

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CALL Leiden 28.-30.08.2023

Numeral classifiers world wide (WALS)



Attestations of numeral classifier systems in Benue-Congo

Cross River: Kana [...]

Tivoid: Tiv, Ugare, Evand, Icheve [...]

Grassfields:

 Eastern Grassfields: Ngiemboon, Ngwe, Bafanji, Bali-Mungaka etc.

 Ring: Isu etc.

Ekoid: Ejagham

Mamfe: Denya

Beboid: ?

Yemne-Kimbi: ?

Jukunoid: ?

Plateau: ?

Kainji: ?

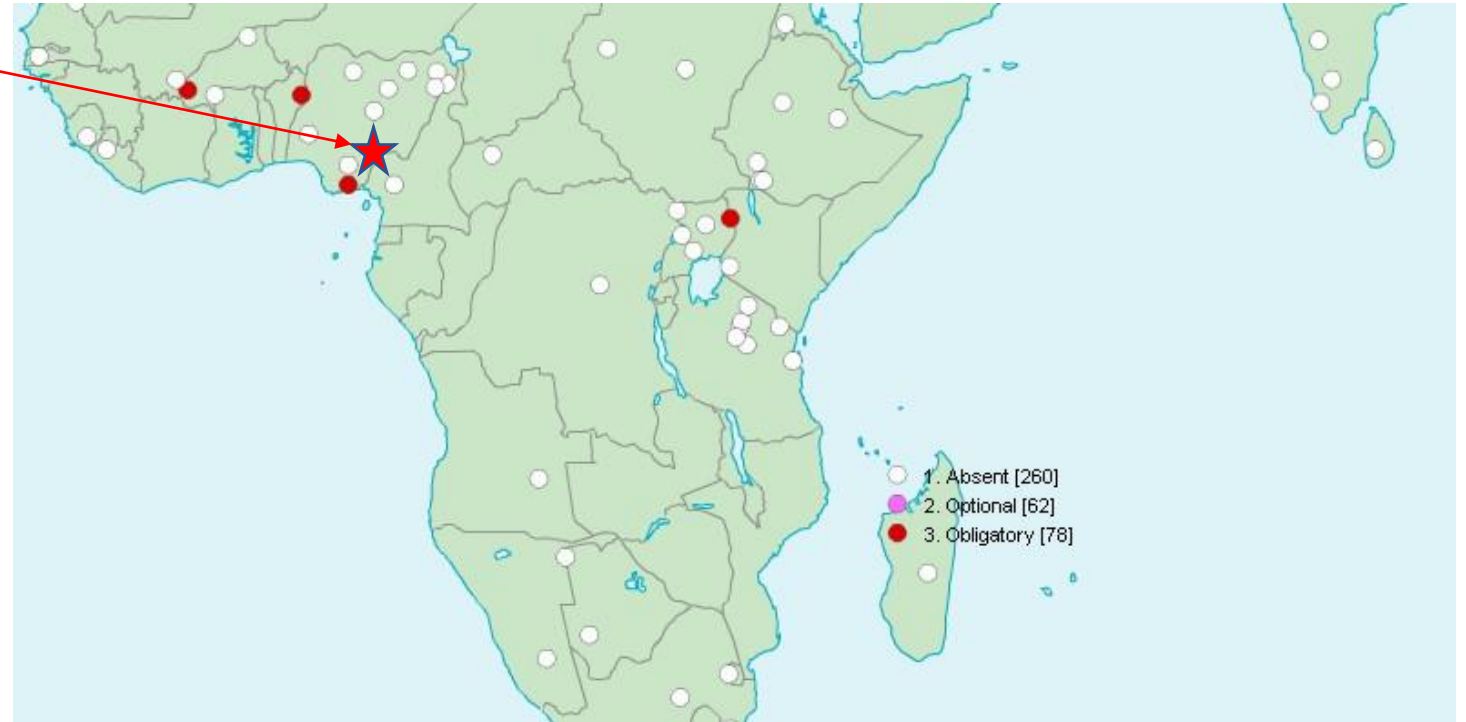
Jarawan: ?

Northern Bantoid: ?



Icheve as African numeral classifier language

- under-described Tivoid;
Cameroon/Nigeria
- 10,000 speakers (Eberhard & al. 2023)
- Bantoid noun class system, various Tivoid complexities (e.g. circumfixation of adnominal class markers)
- Concurrent numeral classifier system



Icheve noun class system: noun affixes and concords

	NP _x /NS _x	NumP _x /S _x	AMP _x	ENC	example
1	ù-, ò-, à- [...]	ù- -`	wù-	= ´	ù-kē ‘woman’
2	v- -v, ó-[...]	vá- -(v) ´	vè-	= v ´	v-ù-kē-v ‘women’
3	ó- -´, ú- -´, [...]	ó- -´	wú-	= ´	ó-hómbó ‘brain’, ú-sāl ‘root’
5	í- -´, é- -´	í- -´	íy-	= ´	í-tíné ‘stem’
6	á- (-´), é- (-´)	á- -´	áy-	= ´	á-kāsé ‘legs’, é-tíné ‘stem’
6a	mí- -mí, mí- -mú	mí- -(m) ´	máy-	= m ´	mí-kúlè-mí ‘oil’, mí-sólò-mū ‘alcoholic drink’
7	ké- (-u´), (u)í- -u´ [...]	kí- -u´	kíy-	= u´	ké-tòwō ‘liver’, í-jíè-u ‘tooth’
8	vé- (v´), ví- -ví, [...]	ví- -(vē)	vìy-	= v ´	vé-tòwō ‘livers’, ví-tíngì-ví ‘medicines’
9	ì- -`, è- -`	ì- -`	ìy-	= ´	ì-jàm ‘animal’, è-sīmā ‘heart’
10	í- -´, é- -(é)	í- -´	íy-	= ´	í-nū: ‘mouths’, é-sāl-é ‘roots’
12	(k)á- -u´(é) [...]	(k)á- -u´	(k)áy-	= u´	(k)á-mólú-u ‘lumps (in food)’
15	(k)ú- -u´é, ó- -u´é [...]	(k)ú- -u´	kúw-	= u´	ó-kásí-u´é ‘leg’



Icheve numeral classifier system

- 1a. *uí-dúṅgwé-uí* *kíy-ē* óṅḁs = *úu* *kí-m̃-uí*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7-AM 1:onion = 7.ENC 7-one-7
'one onion' (lit. 'one fruit of onion')
- b. *ví-dúṅgwé-ví* *víy-ē* vā-ōṅḁs = *úv* *ví-fà:lé-v*
8-CLF < FRUIT-8 8-AM 2:onion = 8.ENC 8-two-8
'two onions' (lit. 'two fruits of onions')

sortal classifiers (vs. mensural classifiers), applied to nouns of high countability, based on haptic features of the enumerated item, e.g. bulging shape of mussels, subdividing the inventory of count nouns into semantic classes (Gil 2005)

restricted system: no full lexical coverage

all classifiers are etymologically transparent, derived from full nouns, e.g. *uí-dúṅgwé-uí* (7/8) 'fruit'

incipient stage of development

Morphosyntax: reanalysis of associative construction

$N_1 \ N_2 \ \text{NUM} > \text{CLF} \ N \ \text{NUM}$



Quantification by numeral without additional classifier

2a. *ɥí-dúŋwé-ɥí kǐ-m̃-ɥ*

7-CLF < FRUIT-7

‘one fruit’

7-one-7

b *á-túŋw̃*

6-ear:6

‘two ears’

á-fà:lé

6-two:6

c *v-ù-kě-v*

2-1-woman-2

‘three women’

vá-tât

2-three:2



Icheve numeral classifiers as head nouns in associative constructions

**Icheve numeral classifiers derive from full fledged nouns retaining all nominal properties:
(a) gender assignment, (b) pluralization, (c) trigger of agreement.**

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------------------|--|
| 1a | <i>ɥí-dúŋgwé-ɥí</i>
7-CLF < FRUIT-7
'one onion' (lit. 'one fruit of onion') | <i>kíy-ē</i>
7-AM | <i>òṅ̀ḍs = úɥ</i>
1:onion = 7.ENC
7-one-7 |
| 1b | <i>ví-dúŋgwé-ví</i>
8-CLF < FRUIT-8
'two onions' (lit. 'two fruits of onions') | <i>víy-ē</i>
8.AM | <i>và-ōṅ̀ḍs = úv ví-fà:lé-v</i>
2-beancake = 8.ENC 8-two-8 |
| 3a | <i>ɥí-tíŋgĩ-ɥí</i>
7-medicine-7
'medicine of a man' | <i>kíy-ē</i>
7-AM | <i>ò-nòl-óɥ</i>
1-person-7.ENC |
| 3b | <i>ví-tíŋgĩ-ví</i>
8-medicine-8
'medicines of a man' | <i>víy-ē</i>
8-AM | <i>ò-nòl-óv</i>
1-person-8.ENC |

Morphosyntax of Icheve numeral classifier constructions

Classifier constructions derive from associative constructions:

CLF AM N NUM < N₁ AM N₂ NUM

Parameters:

- (a) classifier noun (CLF) acts as head noun and triggers noun class agreement in relevant targets:
- (b) AM associative marker that links classifier (CLF) and enumerated noun (N₂) and
- (c) in the numeral (NUM),
- (d) the noun class suffix of the enumerated noun is suppressed and
- (e) replaced by an enclitic (NEncl) that indexes the noun class of the head noun.
- (f) the noun class prefix of the enumerated noun receives a low tone and tends to segmental erosion

[[NP_{x₁}-CLF-NS_{x₁}] [AM₁ = (NP_{x₂}-)N-NS_{x₂} = NEncl₁]] CP_{x₁}-NUM-CS_{x₁}

Legend:

AM associative marker, CLF classifier (noun), CP_x concordial noun class prefix, CS_x concordial noun class suffix, NEncl noun class enclitic, NP_x adnominal noun class prefix, adnominal noun class suffix



Morphosyntax of Icheve numeral classifier constructions cont.

4a. Classifier construction:

vé-té-vé

8-CLF < LIVING.TREE-8

víy-ē

8-AM

uṛ-sòlǔ-v

7-frog = 8.ENC

ví-fà:lé-v

8-one-8

‘two (strings of) skewered frogs’ (lit. ‘two living trees of frogs’)

b. Associative construction:

ú-wó-uy

15-hand-15

kúw-è

15-AM

vì-tīngǐ-uy

8-medicine-15.ENC

ú-mṣ-uy

15-

ONE-15

‘one hand of medicines’



Classifiers in combination with transnumerals

Unpaired nouns (transnumerals), e.g. *ù-sōyàbìn* (cl. 1) ‘soyabeans’, require sortal classifiers like *è-kpālē* ~ *á-kpálé* (cl. 9/6) ‘amulet/s’ and mensural classifiers like *ì-kū:f(ù)* / *á-kū:fú* (cl. 9/6) ‘heap/s’, respectively, for specification of their haptic features and type of aggregation

5a. *è-kpālē* *ìy-ē* *ù-sōyàbín* *ì-mò*
 9-CLF < AMULET:9 9-AM 1-soya.beans:ENC 9-one:9
 ‘one soyabean pod’ (lit. ‘one amulet of soyabeans’)

b. *á-kū:fú* *áy-è* *ù-sōyàbín* *á-fà:lé*
 6-CLF < HEAP:6 6-AM 1-soya.beans:ENC 6-two:6
 ‘two heaps of soyabeans’



classifiers with paired nouns

Paired nouns (transnumerals) *î-sā:lē* ~ *á-sā:lē* (5/6) 'stalk/s of oil palm fond' with which brooms are made, are counted with sortal classifiers like *ó-sāl* ~ *é-sāl-é* (cl. 3/10) 'root/s' and mensural classifiers like *uī-fímé-u* ~ *á-fímé* (cl. 7/6) 'bunch/s', respectively, for specification of their haptic features and type of aggregation

- 6a. *ó-sāl* *wú-ē* *î-sā:lē* *ó-m̃*
 3-CLF < ROOT:3 3-AM 5-oil.palm.fond.stalk:ENC 3-
 one:3
 'one broom stick' (lit. 'one root of stalk of oil palm fond')
- b. *á-fímé* *áy-ē* *î-sā:lē* *á-fà:lé*
 6-CLF < BUNCH:68-AM 5-oil.palm.fond.stalk:ENC 6-two:6
 'two bunches of stalks of oil palm fond'



Criteria for differentiating nouns of high vs. low countability in Icheve

The ability of a noun to fall with the scope of all or some of the denominators in the language, e.g. *ónìðs* ~ *và-ōñìðs* (1/2) ‘onion/s’ counted with ‘fruit’ in contrast to *ì-ñàm* (9) ‘meat’

7a. *ónìðs* *mò*
 onion:1 1:one
 ‘one onion’

*b. *ì-ñàm* *ì-mò*
 9-meat:9 9-one
 ‘one onion’



Singular vs. plural enumerated nouns

Enumerated nouns are not always required to come in their singular forms, as it is possible to replace them by their plural forms in the classifier construction. Semantic effect of the plural enumerated noun: X number of different types of Y.

- 8a. *é-tiné* *áy-ē* *ì-lié* *á-tāt*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6-AM 9-kola.nut:ENC 6-
three:6
'three trees of a kola nut specie' (lit. 'three stems of kola nut')
- b. *é-tiné* *áy-ē* *à-lié* *á-tāt*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6-AM 6-kola.nut:ENC 6-three:6
'three trees of various kola nut species' (lit. 'three stems of kola nuts')



Singular vs. plural enumerated nouns

The following combinations below actually occur:

CLF(SG) N(SG)

CLF(PL) N(SG)

CLF(PL) N(PL)

Non-occurring combinations: CLF(SG) N(PL)

9a. *é-tiné* *áy-ē* *ì-lié* *á-fà:lé*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6-AM 9-kola.nut:ENC 6-two:6
‘two trees of a kola nut specie’ (lit. ‘two stems of kola nut’)

b. *é-tiné* *áy-ē* *à-lié* *á-fà:lé*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6-AM 6-kola.nut:ENC 6-two:6
‘two trees of various kola nut species’ (lit. ‘two stems of kola nuts’)



Icheve numeral classifiers in a Tivoid perspective

Icheve numeral classifier *uí-dúngwé-uí* (7/8) ‘fruit’:

- 1a *uí-dúngwé-uí* *kíy-ē* ónòs = *úu* *kí-mṵ-u*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7-AM 1:onion = 7.ENC 7-one-7
‘one onion’ (lit. ‘one fruit of onion’)

Evand numeral classifier *kí-tām-ék* (7/8) ‘fruit’:

- 10 *kí-tām-ék* *k* = àkàrà = *k* *kí-mṵ-k*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7.AM = 1.beancake = 7.ENC 7-one-7
‘one beancake’ (lit. ‘one fruit of beancake’)

Ugare: numeral classifier *ú-gbéndé* (3/6) ‘muscle’ for items with bulging shape:

- 11 *ú-gbéndé* *û-gwándè* *ú-twǎm*
3-CLF < muscle 3.AM:3-mussel 3-one
‘one mussel’ (lit. ‘one muscle of mussel’)

Tiv: numeral classifier *ì-sàngè* (9/10) ‘seed/grain’ for small items

- 12 *ì-sàngè* *ì* *à-bá:tfá* *ì-mǎm*
9-CLF < seed 9.AM 6-letter 9-one
‘one letter’ (lit. ‘one seed/grain of letters’)



Numeral classifiers: sortal vs. mensural

Categories	Source meanings
Sortal classifiers (haptic criteria)	SEED, LEAF, STEM, ROPE, STALK, DEAD TREE, ROOT, FINGER, HEAD, AMULET, LEG, PALM NUT, FRUIT.
Mensural classifiers (aggregation or partition, nouns of low countability)	BUNCH, BUNDLE, HALF, LUMP, HEAP, BANANA-HAND, LIVING TREE.



Criteria for distinguishing sortal vs. Mensural

If the (enumerated) noun that falls within the classifiers scope is in mass or aggregated or not

13a. *á-sāṅgé* *áy-ē* *ò-gálǎ* *á-fà:lé*
6-CLF < SEED:66-AM 3-pepper:ENC 6-two:6
'two pepper fruits' (lit. 'two seeds of pepper')

b. *ì-kū:f* *ìy-ē* *ò-gálǎ* *ì-mò*
9-CLF < HEAP:9 9-AM 3-pepper:ENC 9-
one:9
'one heap of pepper fruits'



Icheve sortal classifiers (1)

classifier source forms	meaning: range of application
<i>è-sàṅgē ~ á-sāṅgé</i> (cl. 9/6) 'seed/s'	small globular objects: bean, nut, button, seed, fruits with small seeds, seeds of stone fruits like cashew [...]
<i>ó-kāṅgí ~ é-kāṅgé</i> (cl. 3/10) 'leaf/s'	leaves and (food) items wrapped in leaves: puddings/native breads [...]
<i>ó-sāl ~ é-sāl-é</i> (cl. 3/10) 'root/s'	tubers, long slender leaves, sticks, and skewered food: potato, cassava, palm leaves, broom, cricket
<i>í-tíné ~ é-tíné</i> (cl. 5/6) 'stem/s'	longish pythomorphic and zoomorphic outgrowths from a base (root): plantain, hair, [...]
<i>ú-yí ~ í-yí</i> (cl. 3/10) 'rope/s'	flexible phythomorphic items detached from their base: beans, potato, cowpea [...]
<i>í-gwōṅgwó ~ á-gwōṅgwó</i> (cl. 5/6) 'stalk/s'	semi-flexible phythomorphic items detached from their base:: cassava, corn, spinach [...]
<i>ó-kōn(ó) ~ é-kōn(ó)</i> (cl. 3/10) '(dead) tree'	rigid phythomorphic items detached from their base: kolanut, pawpaw, pear [...]



Icheve sortal classifiers (2)

classifier source forms	meaning: range of application
<i>ó-núm ~ í-núm</i> (cl. 3/10) 'finger/s'	fingers of plantain and banana
<i>ì-kō ~ á-kó</i> (cl. 9/6) '(palm)nut/s'	nuts of stone fruits
<i>kí-tó-ɥ ~ ví-tó-ɥ</i> (cl. 7/8) 'head/s'	big round fruits and vegetables: water(melon), cabbage [...]
<i>è-kpālē ~ á-kpálé</i> (cl. 9/6) 'amulet/s'	plant calyxes and pods: bombax, locust beans, ironwood [...]
<i>ɥɔ́-kásí-ɥé ~ á-kásé</i> (cl. 15/6) 'leg/s'	footwear: shoe, socks, slippers
<i>ɥí-dúŋgwé-ɥí ~ ví-dúŋgwé-ví</i> (cl. 7/8) 'fruit/s'	(local) ovate botanical products: onion, tomato [...]
<i>ké-tām-ék ~ ví-tám-év</i> (cl. 7/8) 'fruit/s'	(exotic) ovate formations from dough: buns, cake [...]
<i>ké-té-k ~ vé-té-vé</i> (cl. 7/8) 'stick/s'	oblong rigid objects (esp. food items): fish, frog, cricket, [...]



Sortal classifiers: SEED

è-sàngē ~ *á-sāngé* (cl. 9/6) 'seed/s':

smallish globular objects: bean, nut, button, fruits with small seeds,
stone fruits seeds like cashew [...]

14a. *è-sàngē* *ìy-è* *è-sā* *ì-mò*
9-CLF < SEED:99-AM 9-bead:ENC 9-one:9
'one bead' (lit. 'one seed of bead')

b. *á-sāngé* *áy-ē* *ò-gálǎ* *á-fà:lé*
6-CLF < SEED:66-AM 3-pepper:ENC 6-two:6
'two pepper fruits' (lit. 'two seeds of pepper')



Sortal classifiers: LEAF

ó-kāṅgí ~ *é-kāṅgé* (cl. 3/10) 'leaf/s':

leaves and (food) items wrapped in leaves: puddings/native breads [...]

15a. *ó-kāṅgí* *úw-ē* *ɥè-kāndé* *ó-m̃*
3-CLF < LEAF:3 3-AM 7-pudding:ENC 3-one:3
'one pudding' (lit. 'one leaf of pudding')

b. *é-kāṅgé* *íy-ē* *ì-fīní* *í-tāt*
10-CLF < LEAF:10 10-AM 9-bean:ENC 10-
three:10
'two bean puddings' (lit. 'two leaves of pudding')



Sortal classifiers: ROOT

ó-sāl ~ *é-sāl-é* (cl. 3/10) 'root/s' :

tubers, long slender leaves, sticks, and skewered food: potato, cassava, palm leaves, broom, cricket [...]

- 16a. *ó-sāl* *wú-ē* *ì-nāná* *ó-m̃*
3-CLF < ROOT:3 3-AM 9-potato:ENC 3-
one:3
'one potato tuber' (lit. 'one root of potato')
- b. *é-sāl-é* *íy-ē* *ì-sā:lē* *í-fà:lé*
10-CLF < ROOT:10 10-AM 5-broom:ENC
10-two:10
'two broom sticks' (lit. 'two roots of broom')



Sortal classifiers: STEM

í-tíné ~ *é-tíné* (cl. 5/6) ‘stem/s’:

longish outgrowths from a phytho- or zoomorphic base (root):
plantain, hair, [...]

17a. *í-tíné* *íy-ē* ò-gàlá *í-m̃*
5-CLF < STEM:5 5-AM 3-pepper:ENC 5-
one:5
‘one pepper plant’ (lit. ‘one stem of pepper’)

b. *é-tíné* *áy-ē* ò-nǔ *á-tāt*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6-AM 3-hair:ENC 6-two:6
‘two (strands of) hair’ (lit. ‘two stems of hair’)



Sortal classifiers: ROPE vs. STALK vs. DEAD TREE

ú-yí ~ *í-yí* (3/10) 'rope':

phythomorphic items with flexible stems detached from their base: beans, potatoes, cowpeas, [...]

í-gwǎṅgwǎ / *á-gwǎṅgwǎ* (cl. 5/6) 'stalk/s':

semi-flexible phythomorphic items detached from their base: cassava, corn, spinach [...]

- 18a. *ú-yí* *úw-ē* *ì-nāṇá* *ú-mǎ*
 3-CLF < ROPE:3 3-AM 9-potato:ENC 3-one:3
 'one sweet potato plant (without roots)'
- b. *í-yí* *íy-ē* *ì-hòmbó* *í-tát*
 10-CLF < ROPE:10 10-AM 5-yellow.yam:ENC 10-three:10
 'three yellow yam plants (without roots)'
- c. *í-gwǎṅgwǎ* *íy-ē* *è-mīné* *í-mǎ*
 5-CLF < STALK:5 5-AM 9-millet:ENC 5-one:5
 'one millet plant (without roots)'
- d. *á-gwǎṅgwǎ* *áy-ē* *ì-kùlé* *á-fà:lē*
 6-CLF < STALK:10 6-AM 1-guinea.corn:ENC 6-two:6
 'two guinea corn plants (without roots)'



Sortal classifiers: **DEAD TREE**

ó-kōn(ó) ~ *é-kōn(ó)* (cl. 3/10) '(dead) tree':
rigid phythomorphic items detached from their base: kolanut,
pawpaw, pear [...]

19a. *ó-kōn(ó)* *úw-ē* *ĩ-lìé* *ú-mō*
3-CLF < DEAD.TREE:3 3-AM 9-kola.nut:ENC 3-
one:3
'one orange tree (without roots)'

b. *é-kōn(ó)* *íy-ē* *ù-bwēlí* *í-tāt*
10-CLF < DEAD.TREE:10 10-AM 1-pawpaw:ENC 10-
three:10
'three cashew tree (without root)'



Sortal classifiers: FRUIT vs. FRUIT

ɥí-dúŋwé-ɥí ~ *ví-dúŋwé-ví* (cl. 7/8) ‘fruit/s’:

original Icheve ovate botanical products: onion, tomato [...]

ké-tām-ék ~ *ví-tám-én* (cl. 7/8) ‘fruit/s’:

ovate formations from dough that Icheve users regard as borrowings : buns, cake [...]

- | | | | | |
|------|---|----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 20a. | <i>uyí-dúngwé-uyí</i>
7-CLF < FRUIT-7
'one onion' (lit. 'one fruit of onions') | <i>kíy-ē</i>
7-AM | <i>ónḁs = úuy</i>
1:onion = 7.ENC | <i>kí-mḁ-uy</i>
7-one-7 |
| b. | <i>ví-dúngwé-ví</i>
8-CLF < FRUIT-8
'one okra fruits' (lit. 'two fruits of okra') | <i>víy-ē</i>
8-AM | <i>ì-tùfūlú = v</i>
9-okra = 8.ENC | <i>ví-fà:lé-v</i>
8-two-8 |
| c. | <i>ké-tām-ék</i>
7-CLF < FRUIT:7
'one bun (of a type)' (lit. 'one fruit of buns') | <i>kíy-ē</i>
7-AM | <i>ù-kpḁfkpḁf = úuy</i>
1-bun = 7.ENC | <i>kí-mḁ-uy</i>
7-one-7 |
| d. | <i>ví-tám-év</i>
8-CLF < FRUIT-8
'two (loaves of) bread' (lit. 'two fruits of bread') | <i>víy-ē</i>
8-AM | <i>ù-brēd = ív</i>
1-bread = 8.ENC | <i>ví-fà:lé-v</i>
8-two-8 |



Icheve mensural classifiers (aggregation, partition)

classifier source forms	meaning
<i>uɣí-ʃímé-uɣ ~ á-ʃímé</i> (cl. 7/6) 'bunch/s'	items which come in a bunch naturally: palm kernel, raffia palm [...]
<i>è-sāuɣ ~ á-sāuɣ</i> (cl. 9/6) 'bunch/s'	bunches of bananas and plantains of different type
<i>ɔ̃-pāv ~ á-páv-é</i> (cl. 1/6) 'half/halves'	items that are broken generally or come in sheets
<i>ɔ̃-vó:lú ~ é-vó:lú</i> (cl. 3/10) 'bundle/s'	items packed in a tied bundle
<i>ì-kū:ʃ(ù) ~ á-ku:ʃú</i> (cl. 9/6) 'heap/s'	items with (ir)regular shapes and chunks piled up
<i>ú-kí ~ í-kí</i> (cl. 3/10) 'lump/s'	portions of fufu
<i>ɔ̃-tángē ~ í-tángē</i> (cl. 3/10) 'banana hand/s'	hands of banana and plantain
<i>ké-té-k ~ vé-té-vé</i> (cl. 7/8) '(living) tree/s'	oblong rigid objects (esp. food items): fish, frog, cricket, [...]



Partitional classifiers with botanical items

Partitional classifiers for referential specification of botanical concepts: e.g., *ó-gālā* (cl. 3/10) ‘pepper’.

- 21a. *í-tíné* *íy-ē* *ò-gàlá* *í-m̃*
5-CLF < STEM:5 5-AM 3-pepper:ENC 5-one:5
‘one pepper plant’ (lit. ‘one stem of pepper’)
- b. *á-gw̃ngw̃* *áy-ē* *ò-gàlá* *á-fà:lē*
6-CLF < STALK:10 6-AM 3-pepper:ENC 6-two:6
‘two pepper plants (without roots)’
- c. *ó-kāngí* *úw-ē* *ò-gàlá* *ó-m̃*
3-CLF < LEAF:3 3-AM 3-pepper:ENC 3-one:3
‘one pepper leaf’
- d. *á-sāngé* *áy-ē* *ò-gàlá* *á-fà:lé*
6-CLF < SEED:6 6-AM 3-pepper:ENC 6-two:6
‘two pepper fruits’ (lit. ‘two seeds of pepper’)



Partitional classifiers with botanical items

It is ungrammatical to combine the bare nouns for these botanical items directly with numerals .

*22a.	<i>ó-gālā</i>	<i>ó-m̃</i>
	3-pepper:3	3-one:3
	‘one pepper’	

*b.	<i>á-tùfūlū</i>	<i>á-fà:lē</i>
	6-okra:6	6-two:6
	‘two okras’	



Conclusion

**incipient numeral classifier system parallel to other Tivoid languages
(Tiv, Ugare [...])**

concurrent to full fledged noun class system of Benue-Congo type

restricted lexical coverage

**classifiers originate in synchronically coexisting nouns and retain all
nominal properties (syntactic independence, gender assignment,
number sensitivity, trigger of noun class agreement)**

**classifier construction inherits the full spectrum of its source, i.e.
associative construction**

weakly grammaticalised, sole indicator: semantic generalisation



Conclusion

Embryonic stage of Icheve numeral classifier system reflected in weak grammaticalisation

	Icheve	Evand	Ugare	Tiv	Ejagham	Ngəmba
all CLFs retain syntactic independency	+	+	+	-	-	-
all CLFs retain PL form	+	+	+	+	+	-
all CLFs retain gender of source noun	+	+	-	+	+	-
CLF construction parallels associative construction in all respects	+	+	+	+	+	-
semantic generalisation of CLF	+	+	+	+	+	+



A bundle of thanks for your attention

NuClaBA project (“Numeral classifiers of the Benue-Congo languages of Africa”)

Angitso & Kießling

