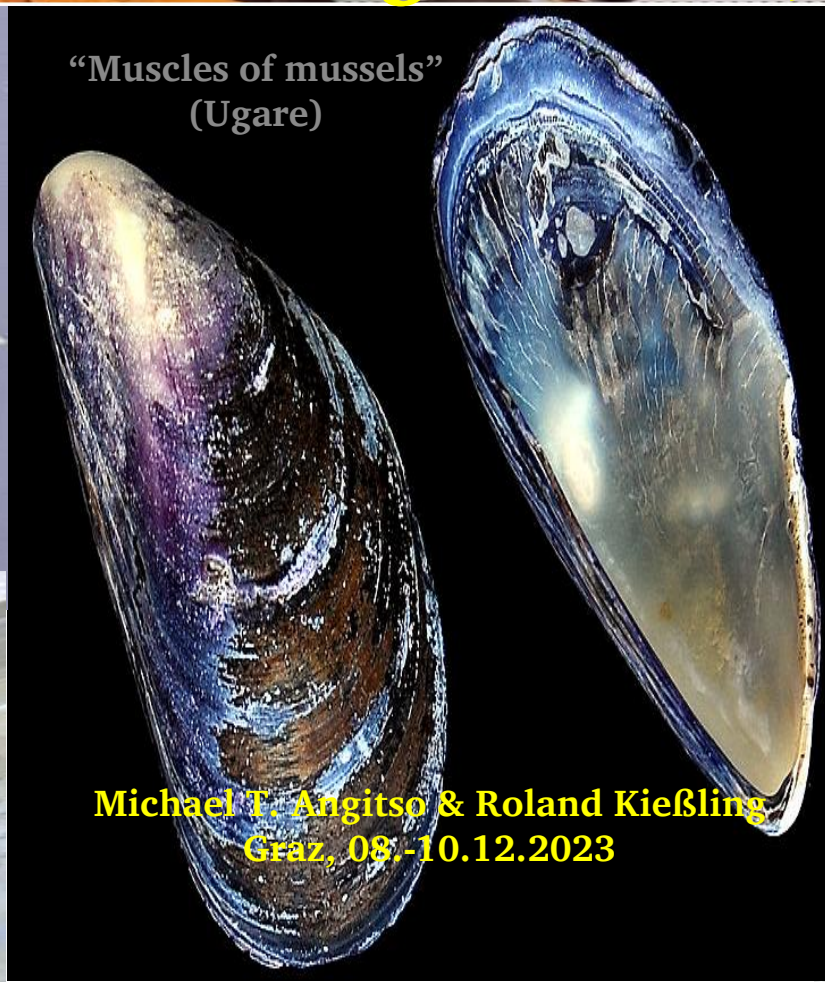


‘Legs of shoes’ – the (early stage) numeral classifier system of Itang (Tivoid, Nigeria)



“Ropes of potatoes”
(Icheve)



“Muscles of mussels”
(Ugare)



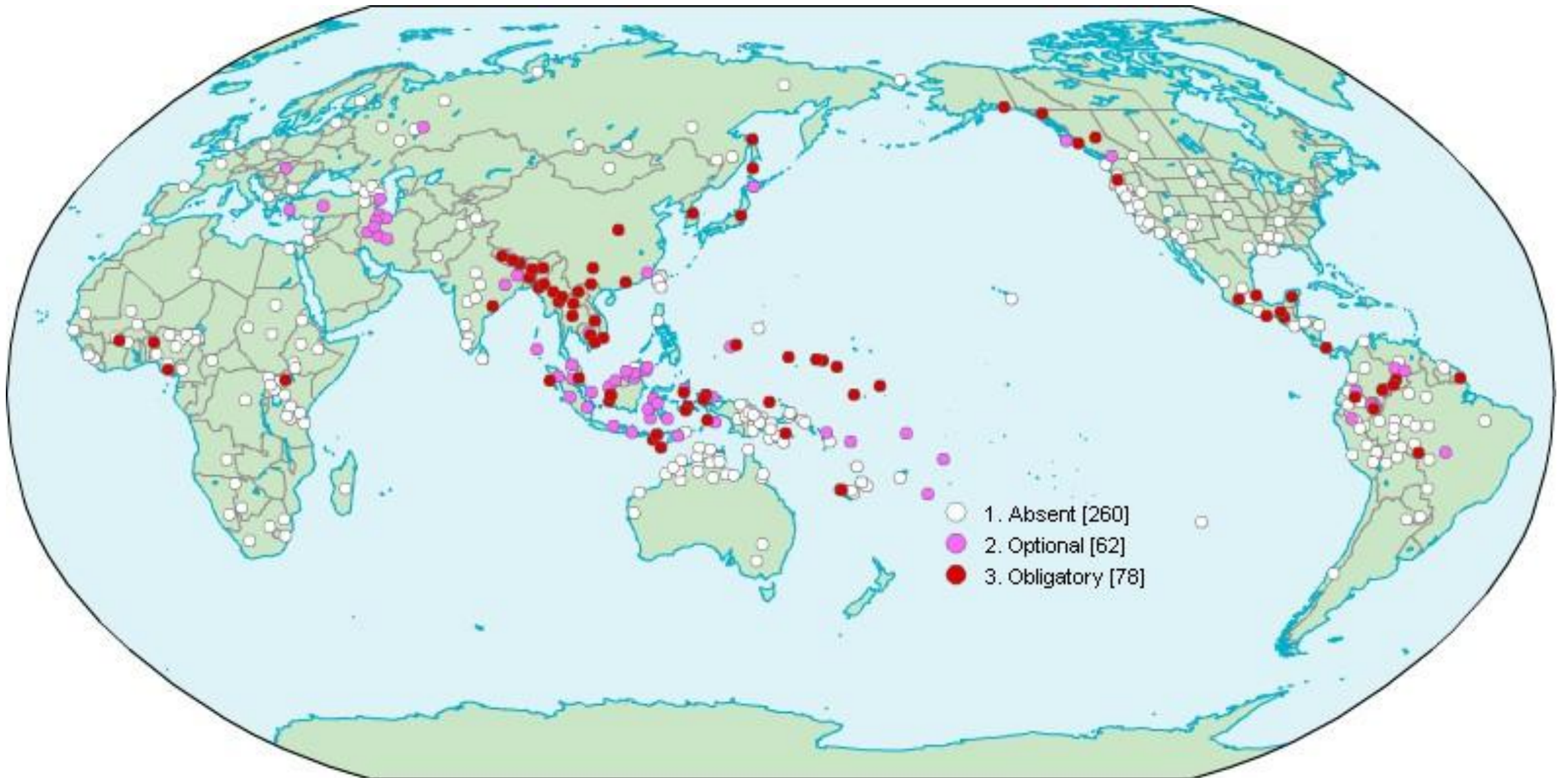
“Fruits of potatoes”
(Evand)



“Persons of bees”
(Tiv)

Michael T. Angitso & Roland Kießling
Graz, 08.-10.12.2023

Numeral classifiers world wide (WALS)



Attestations of numeral classifier systems in Benue-Congo

Cross River: Kana [...]

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

Grassfields:

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

 Ring: Isu etc.

Ekoid: Ejagham

Mamfe: Denya

Beboid: ?

Yemne-Kimbi: ?

Jukunoid: ?

Plateau: ?

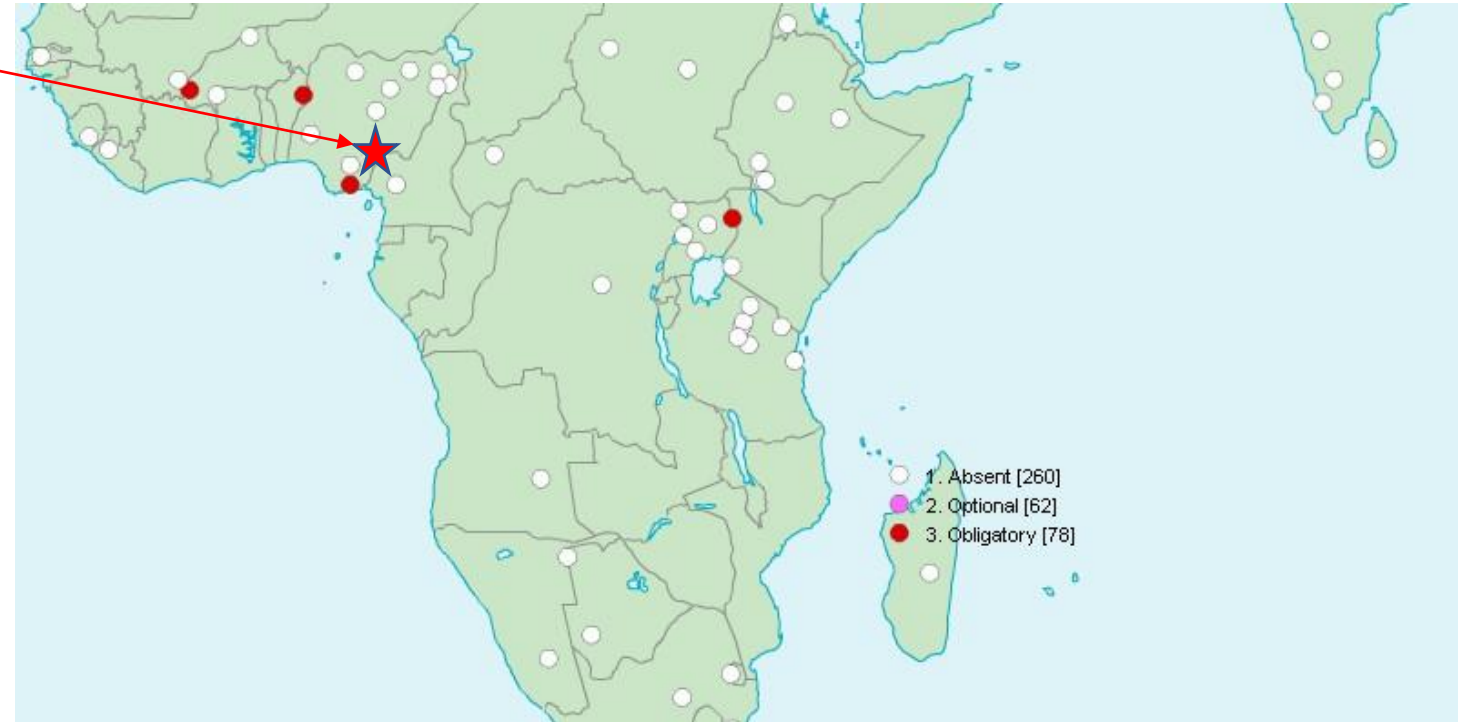
Kainji: ?

Jarawan: ?

Northern Bantoid: ?

Itang as African numeral classifier language

- under-described Tivoid; Nigeria
- 24,000 speakers (Eberhard & al. 2023)
- Bantoid noun class system, various Tivoid complexities (e.g. circumfixation of adnominal class markers)
- Concurrent numeral classifier system



Itang noun class system: noun affixes and concords

	NP _x /NS _x	AL		DetP _x	NumP _x	example
		ALP _x -	-ALS _x			
1	- (-̀), ù-, [...]	ù-	-̀	∅-	ù-	<i>tĩl</i> ‘father’, <i>w-ān</i> ‘child’
2	ù-, ìy-, á- -v(´), [...]	á-	-v´	v-	á-	<i>ù-tĩl</i> ‘fathers’
2a	m̀- -m			m-		<i>m̀y-ē-m</i> ‘children’
3	ú- (-´)	ú-	-´	∅-	ú-	<i>ú-túm</i> ‘gun’
5	í- (-´)	í-	-´	∅-	í-	<i>í-hó</i> ‘day’
6	á- (-´), á- -á	á-	-´	∅-	á-	<i>á-sá</i> : ‘beads’
6a	m̀- -m̀, má- -m	m̀-	-m´	m-	m̀-	<i>m̀-dzìlĩnĩ-m</i> ‘sandflies’
7	í- -y(´)	í-	-y´	y-	í-	<i>í-yò-y</i> ‘yam’
8	í- -v(´)	ví-	-v´	v-	í-	<i>í-yò-v</i> ‘yams’
9	ì- (-̀)	ì-	-̀	∅-	ì-	<i>ì-fà</i> ‘bead’
10	í- (-´)	í-	-´	∅-	í-	<i>í-túm</i> ‘guns’
14	í- -v(´)	vú-	-v´	v-	ú-	<i>ú-yà-v</i> ‘stomach’
15	ú- -y(´)	ú-	-y´	y-	ú-	<i>ú-tó-y</i> ‘ear’

Itang numeral classifier system

- 1a. *ú-vòl-ūy* *ú = ù-kó = y* *ú-mòm*
15-CLF < LEG-15 15.AM = 3-shoe = 15.ENC 15-one
'one shoe' (lit. 'one leg of shoe')
- b. *á-vòl* *á = à-kó* *á-hàl*
6-CLF < LEG 6.AM = 6-shoe:ENC 6-two
'two shoes' (lit. 'two legs of shoes')

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:

- 2a. *ú-vòl-ūy* *ú-mòm*
15-leg-15 15-one
'one leg'
- b. *á-vòl* *á-hàl*
6-CLF < leg 6-two
'two legs'

Etymology of numeral classifiers

All classifiers are etymologically transparent, derived from full nouns, e.g. *ú-vòl-ūy* (15/6)
'leg/s'

➤ transparent lexical semantics

➤ noun class agreement trigger

➤ Syntactic autonomy, e.g. occurring in argument positions

3a.	<i>ú-vòl-ūy</i> 15-leg-15 'a leg is falling'	<i>ù = kú-ì</i> 15.SM = 15-AUX	<i>gbà-n</i> fall-PTCP
b.	<i>á-vòl</i> 6-leg 'legs are falling'	<i>à = ngā-ì</i> 6.SM = 6-AUX	<i>gbà-n</i> fall-PTCP

Morphosyntax of Itang numeral classifier constructions

Morphosyntax: reanalysis of associative construction

4. CLF N NUM < N₁ N₂ NUM

a. Classifier construction

ú-ká

3-CLF < LEAF

‘one (game) card’ (lit. ‘one leaf of (game) card’)

ú=káăd

3.AM = 1.game.card:ENC

ú-mòm

3-one

b. Associative construction

ú-ká

3-leaf

‘one leaf of a king’

ú=tòlǒ

3.AM = 1.king:ENC

ú-mòm

3-one

Inherited associative construction properties

Suffix deletion, high to low tone changes in prefixes, addition of enclitic headedness index:

5a. Classifier construction

<i>í-yò-γ</i>	<i>í-tíné</i>	<i>í = ì-yǒ</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-yam-7	→ 5-CLF < STEM:5	5.AM-7.yam:ENC	5-one
‘yam’	‘one yam plant (with roots)’		

b. Associative construction

<i>í-yò-γ</i>	<i>ṇ-ṇgṓ</i>	<i>ù = ì-yǒ</i>	<i>ù-mòm</i>
7-yam-7	→ 1-mother	1.AM-7.yam:ENC	1-one
‘yam’	‘one mother of yam’		

Grammaticalisation 1

Incipient formal split of classifier constructions from ordinary associative constructions:

6a. Full associative construction

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>í-nǎ-y</i>	<i>ì-gbēng = ěy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	7-AM-7	9-orange = 7.ENC	7-one
'one orange fruit'			

b. Reduced associative construction

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>í = ì-gbēng = ěy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	7.AM = 9-orange = 7.ENC	7-one
'one orange fruit'		

c. Zero-marked associative construction

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>ì-gbēng = ěy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	9-orange = 7.ENC	7-one
'one orange fruit'		

Numeral classifier constructions restricted to reduced and zero-marked associative construction structures:

7a. Numeral classifier construction (Reduced associative construction)

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>í = brē:d = ǐy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	7.AM = 1.bread = 7.ENC	7-one
‘one orange fruit’		

b. Numeral classifier construction (zero-marked associative construction)

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>brē:d = ǐy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	1.bread = 7.ENC	7-one
‘one orange fruit’		

***c. Numeral classifier construction (full associative construction)**

<i>í-tám-íy</i>	<i>í-nǎ-y</i>	<i>brē:d = ǐy</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-fruit-7	7-AM-7	1.bread = 7.ENC	7-one
‘one orange fruit’			

Grammaticalisation 2

Incipient formal split of classifiers from their lexical sources

8. Lexical item *í-sám* (5) 'grains' vs. quantifier *ú-sám* (3)

a. *í-sám* *í* = *ì-gyālă*
5-grain 5.AM = 9-pepper:ENC
'pepper seeds'

b. *ú-sám* *ú* = *ì-nár*
3-grain 3.AM = 7-money:ENC
'multitude of money (in small units)'

*c. *í-sám* *í* = *ì-nár*
5-grain 5.AM = 7-money:ENC
'multitude of money (in small units)'

Contiguity in Itang numeral classifier constructions

Obligatory classifier - enumerated noun adjacency, against general typological assumption of adjacency of numerals and classifiers.

9a. Classifier construction

<i>í-yò-γ</i>		<i>í-tíné</i>	<i>í=ì-yǒ</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
7-yam-7	→	5-CLF < STEM	5.AM-7.yam:ENC	5-one
‘yam’		‘one yam plant (with roots)’		

b. Question

<i>á-t̃nd</i>	<i>á-tíné</i>	<i>á=ì-yǒ</i>	<i>á-mè?</i>
3SG-cut	6-CLF < STEM	6.AM=7-yam:ENC	how.many
‘how man yam plants did s/he cut’			

c. Response

<i>á-t̃nd</i>	<i>í-tíné</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
3SG-cut	5-CLF < STEM	5-one
‘he cut one plant (with roots)’		

?d. Response

<i>á-t̃nd</i>	<i>í-mòm</i>
3SG-cut	5-one
‘he cut one plant (with roots)’	

Combination matrix

Motivated either by the specification of their haptic features or type of aggregation classifiers combine with unpaired (transnumeral) nouns

- | | | | |
|------|--|---|-------------------------|
| 10a. | <i>ì-fàng</i>
9-CLF < SEED
'one pepper fruit' | <i>ì = ì-gyālǎ</i>
9.AM = 9-pepper:ENC | <i>ì-mòm</i>
9-one |
| b. | <i>á-tíhí</i>
6-CLF < HEAP:6
'four heaps of pepper fruits' | <i>á = ì-gyālǎ</i>
6.AM = 9-pepper:ENC | <i>á-nĩ:n</i>
6-four |

Grammatical number of enumerated nouns

Enumerated nouns obligatorily come in their singular forms. Three conditions motivate the pluralisation of an enumerated noun: if it (i) denotes a unit of aggregated items, (ii) naturally comes in a pair, (iii) if the enumerated nouns denote smaller entities that usually occur in mass.

11a. *ú-vòl-ūy* *ú = ù-kó = y* *ú-mòm*
 15-CLF < LEG-15 15.AM = 3-shoe = 15.ENC 15-one
 ‘one shoe’ (lit. ‘one leg of shoe’)

b. *á-vòl* *á = à-kó* *á-hàl*
 6-CLF < LEG 6.AM = 6-shoe:ENC 6-two
 ‘two shoes’ (lit. ‘two legs of shoes’)

12a. *ì-sàng* *ì = ì-ηgònǒ* *ì-mòm*
 9-CLF < SEED 9.AM = 5-stone:ENC 9-one
 ‘one stone’

b. *á-sàng* *á = à-ηgònǒ* *á-hàl*
 6-CLF < SEED 6.AM = 6-stone:ENC 6-two
 ‘two stones’

Itang classifier types and evaluative quantifiers and their source meanings

	source meanings of classifier items
sortal classifiers	PALM NUT, SEED, FRUIT, STEM, ROPE, (PLANT) SHOOT, BRANCH, LEAF, SHELL, POINTER, LEG, STEERING WHEEL (OF A CAR), STALK, FIBRE
mensural classifiers	BUNCH, HEAP, BOTTLE, SLICE, BROKEN PIECE, FLESH PIECE, ERECT TREE, BUNDLE, LEAF, FRUIT
evaluative quantifiers	SINGLE, GRAIN

Itang sortal classifiers (1)

classifier source forms	meaning: range of application
<i>ì-kō</i> / <i>á-kó</i> (9/10) 'palm nut'	seeds of stone fruits: <i>mūngwòl</i> (1/2) 'mango', <i>ù-dzòmb</i> (1/6) 'pear', <i>ì-fànd</i> (9/6) 'cashew'
<i>ù-nōm</i> / <i>á-nóm</i> (3/6) 'pointer'	plantain fruits of various types
<i>ú-vòl-ūy</i> / <i>á-vòl</i> (15/6) 'leg'	footwears: <i>ú-kó(-ú)</i> (3/6) 'shoe' and <i>ì-dzūb</i> (9/6) 'sock', <i>àbàkpà</i> (1/2) 'slippers' [...]
<i>ì-kāl</i> / <i>á-kál</i> (9/6) 'headpad'	roundish skewered big, long, limbless animals: fish <i>ì-fū</i> (9/10) 'fish', <i>ì-yō</i> (9/10) 'snake' [...]
<i>ì-gbēnd</i> / <i>á-gbénd</i> (9/6) 'shell'	bulging shaped item, some stone fruit kernels: 'wild mango', shells of animals: <i>ú-kōmb</i> (3/10) 'mussel', <i>ì-yīvè</i> (9) 'wild mango kernel', <i>ì-kōl</i> (9/6) 'snail' [...]
<i>ú-ká</i> / <i>í-ká</i> (3/10) 'leaf'	Short 2-dimensional flat items and (food) items wrapped in leaves: <i>fòtō</i> (1/2) 'picture', <i>kā:d</i> (1/2) '(game) card' [...]
<i>ì-sàng</i> / <i>á-sàng</i> (9/6) 'seed'	small globular objects: <i>ì-fà</i> (9/6) 'beads, earring', seed, fruits with small seeds like <i>ì-gyāl(à)</i> (9) 'pepper', nuts and seeds of stone fruits like <i>ù-gwòl</i> (9/6) 'kolanut' [...]

Itang sortal classifiers (2)

classifier source forms	meaning: range of application
<i>í-tám-íy</i> / <i>á-tám</i> (7/6) 'fruit'	ovate botanical products and formations: <i>kābèdʒì</i> (1/2) 'cabbage', <i>àtsākā</i> (1/2) 'potato', <i>ì-kòl</i> (9/8) 'cocoyam', <i>ālābās(à)</i> (1/2) 'onion' [...]
<i>í-tíné</i> / <i>á-tíné</i> (5/6) 'stem'	longish outgrowths connected to a base (root): <i>à-tīkōmb</i> (1) 'plantain', <i>í-tfīé</i> (5) 'hair', [...]
<i>ú-kól</i> / <i>í-kól</i> (3/10) 'rope'	crawling plants detached from their base (root): <i>àtsākā</i> (1/2) 'potato', <i>ì-lòv</i> (9/6) 'bean/s', <i>á-démbá</i> (6) 'cowpea' [...]
<i>ú-mènd</i> / <i>í-mènd</i> (3/10) 'shoot'	crawling yam plants (varieties) detached from their base (root): <i>í-yò-γ</i> (7/8) 'yam', <i>á-hùmb(ù)</i> (5/6) 'yellow yam' [...]
<i>ù-gbā</i> / <i>á-gbá</i> (1/6) 'branch'	vegetables trimmed off their roots: <i>ù-sāy</i> (1) 'spinach', <i>ì-fwě</i> (9) 'roselle', [...]
<i>ú-kón</i> (3/10) 'stick'	Leafy or leafless rigid stems of plants: <i>ú-lōgō</i> (3/10) 'cassava', [...]
<i>ú-góngúlú</i> (3/10) 'stalk' or	Leafless rigid stems of plants: <i>ú-lōgō</i> (3/10) 'cassava', [...]
<i>ù-gìlà</i> / <i>á-gìlá</i> (1/6) 'fibre'	slender items: <i>í-tfīé</i> (5) 'hair', <i>ú-òs(ò)</i> (3/10) 'broom (brushwood twigs)' [...]

Sortal classifiers: STEM

í-tíné / *á-tíné* (cl. 5/6) ‘stem/s’:

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

13a. *í-tíné* *í* = *ì-kòlǒ* *í-mòm*
5-CLF < STEM 5.AM = 9-cocoyam:ENC 5-one
‘one cocoyam plant’

b. *á-tíné* *á* = *ì-gyālǎ* *á-hàl*
6-CLF < STEM:6 6.AM = 9-pepper:ENC 6-two
‘three orange plants’

c. *í-tíné* *í* = *ì-tǝlě* *í-mòm*
5-CLF < STEM:5 5.AM = 5-hair:ENC 5-one
‘one (strand of) hair’

Sortal classifiers: **ROPE** vs. **BRANCH** vs. **ERECT TREE**

ú-kór / **í-kór** (3/10) ‘rope’ :
plants with crawling stems detached from their root: *à-tsākà* (1/2) ‘potatoes’ and *á-dēmbá* (6) ‘cowpea’ [...]

ù-gbā / **á-gbá** (1/6) ‘branch’ :
shrubby vegetables trimmed off their roots: *ù-sāy* (1) ‘spinach’, *ì-fwě* (9) ‘roselle’, [...]

14a. **ú-kór** **ú** = *à-tsāká* **ú-mòm**
3-CLF < ROPE:3 3.AM = 1-potato:ENC 3-one
‘one sweet potato plant (without roots)’

b. **í-kór** **í** = *à-dēmbá* **í-hàl**
10-CLF < ROPE:10 10.AM = 6-cowpea:ENC 10-two
‘two cowpea plants (without roots)’

15a. **ù-gbā** **ù** = *ù-sáy* **ù-mòm**
1-CLF < BRANCH:1 1.AM = 1-spinach:ENC 1-one
‘one spinach plant (detached from its root)’

b. **á-gbá** **á** = *ì-fwě* **á-hàl**
6-CLF < BRANCH 6.AM = 9-roselle:ENC 6-two
‘two roselle plants (detached from their roots)’

Sortal classifiers: **DEAD TREE**

ú-kón / *í-kón* (3/6) ‘dead tree’ :

rigid phythomorphic items detached from their base: kolanut, pawpaw, pear [...]

16a. *ú-kón* *ú* = *ù-lōgǒ* *ú-mòm*
3-CLF < DEAD.TREE:3 3.AM = 1-cassava:ENC 3-one
‘one cassava plant (without root)’

b. *í-kón* *í* = *ù-dzòmb* *í-hàl*
10-CLF < DEAD.TREE:10 10.AM = 1-pear:ENC 10-two
‘one pear tree (without root)’

c. *ú-kón* *ú* = *ù-gōlǒ* *ú-mòm*
3-CLF < DEAD.TREE:3 3.AM = 1-kolanut:ENC 3-one
‘one kolanut tree (without root)’

Sortal classifiers: LEAF

ú-ká ~ *í-ká* (cl. 3/10) ‘leaf/s’:

Short 2-dimensional flat items and (food) items wrapped in leaves: *fòtō* (1/2)
‘picture’, *kā:d* (1/2) ‘(game) card’ [...]

17a. *ú-ká* *ú = fòtó* *ú-mòm*
3-CLF < LEAF 3.AM = 1.picture:ENC 3-one
‘one picture’

b. *í-ká* *í = kāăd* *í-hàl*
10-CLF < LEAF 10.AM = 1- card:ENC 10-two
‘two (game) cards’

Sortal classifiers: FRUIT

í-tám-íy / *á-tám* (7/6) ‘fruit’:

ovate tubers and botanical formations like *kābèdzì* (1/2) ‘cabbage’, and *ālābās(à)* (1/2) ‘onion’ [...]

- 18a. *í-tám-íy* *í = ì-kòlǒ = y* *í-mòm*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7.AM = 9-cocoyam = 7.ENC 7-one
‘one cocoyam tuber’
- b. *á-tám* *á = kābèdzǐ* *á-hàl*
6-CLF < FRUIT:6 6.AM = 1.cabbage:ENC 6-two
‘two cabbages’
- c. *í-tám-íy* *í = ālābāsǎ = y* *í-mòm*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7.AM = 1.onion = 7.ENC 7-one
‘one onion’

Sortal classifiers: FIBRE

ù-gìlà / *á-gìlá* (1/6) ‘fibre’:

slender items: *í-tfîé* (5) ‘hair’, *ú-òs(ò)* (3/10) ‘broom (brushwood twigs)’ [...]

19a. *ù-gìlà* *ù = ì-tfîé* *ù-mòm*
 1-CLF < FIBRE:1 1.AM = 5-hair:ENC 1-one
 ‘one (strand of) hair’

b. *á-gìlá* *á = ù-òsǒ* *á-tāl*
 6-CLF < FIBRE:6 6.AM = 3-broom:ENC 1-three
 ‘three broom brushwood twigs’

Itang mensural classifiers (aggregation, partition)

Mensuration type	classifier source forms	meaning
aggregation	<i>ì-fāy</i> / <i>á-fáy</i> (9/6) 'bunch'	Plantain/banana bunch naturally
	<i>ú-súmé-y</i> / <i>á-súmé</i> (15/6) 'bunch'	items which come in a bunch naturally: <i>í-vírè</i> (5/6) 'oil palm (fruits)', <i>ì-tfòl</i> (9/6) 'raffia palm', plantain <i>à-tīkōn</i> (1/2) 'plantain' (overlap), <i>kābèdzì</i> (1/2) 'cabbage' [...]
	<i>ì-tīhì</i> / <i>á-tíhí</i> (9/6) 'heap/s'	items with (ir)regular shapes and chunks piled up: <i>tùmāt</i> (1/2) 'tomatoes', <i>ì-gyāl</i> (9) 'pepper', <i>ì-tùfūlū</i> (9/6) 'okra', <i>í-yò-y</i> (7/8) 'yam', <i>ì-nàm</i> (9) 'meat'
	<i>ú-tē</i> / <i>í-tē</i> (3/10) 'erect tree/s'	skewered food items: <i>í-fām</i> (1/2) 'frog', <i>ì-fū</i> (9/10) 'fish', <i>mò-ŋgādzèmb</i> (1/2) 'cricket', [...]
	<i>ù-vòy</i> / <i>á-vǒy</i> (1/6) 'bundle/s'	items tied in big bundle: spear grass, raffia grass, iron, broom sticks, rice, [...]

Itang mensural classifiers (aggregation, partition)

Mensuration type	classifier source forms	meaning
partition	<i>ú-kpón</i> / <i>í-kpón</i> (3/10) 'bottle/s'	portions of fufu, and bottled drinks
	<i>bèmbīrì</i> ~ <i>á-bèmbīrī</i> (1/6) 'slice'	some type of lengthy pieces of materials
	<i>ù-pāv</i> ~ <i>á-páv</i> (1/6) 'broken piece'	small (short) pieces of items, palm kernel, mirror, [...]
	<i>ì-tfī</i> ~ <i>á-tfī</i> (9/6) 'flesh piece'	pieces of flesh
	<i>ú-ká</i> / <i>í-ká</i> (3/10) 'leaf'	(food) items that come in a formless mass and are parcelled in leaves: <i>ú-mbày</i> (3/10) 'pudding', <i>àgìdī</i> (1/2) 'pap' [...]
	<i>í-tám-íy</i> / <i>á-tám</i> (7/6) 'fruit'	ovate formations from dough and liquid: <i>brēd</i> (1/2) 'bread' [...]

Evaluative quantifiers

A category of classifiers transparently combining their sortal functions with discourse-semantics (evaluation) functions, e.g. (counter-)expectation, politeness, and enumerability.

source forms	evaluative quantifier meaning: range of application
<i>ú-gbéngíl</i> / <i>á-gbéngíl</i> (3/6) 'single item'	blades of implements, single items, counterexpectual low number, pejorative ('just one/few useless single item(s) of X')
<i>ú-sám</i> (3) 'grains'	multitude, innumerable quantity: fine grains, people, coins

Evaluative quantifier: SINGLE ITEM

ú-gbéngĩl / *á-gbéngĩl* (3/6) ‘single item’ :

blades of implements, single items, counterexpectual low number, pejorative
(‘just one/few useless single item(s) of X’)

20a. *ú-gbéngĩl* *ú = à-kùndũ* *ú-mòm*
3-EQ < SINGLE:3 3.AM = 1-weeding.hoe:ENC 3-one
‘one hoe blade’

b. *á-gbéngĩl* *á = sũlě* *á-hàl*
6-EQ < SINGLE:6 6.AM = 1:coin:ENC 6-two
‘two single coins’

21a. *á* *nā = ú* *ví-yò-v* *ĩ-mè*
s/he give = you 8-yam-8 8-how.many
‘how many yams did s/he give you?’

b. *á* *nā = m* *ú-gbéngĩl* *ú = ì-yǒ* *ú-mòm*
s/he give = me 3-EQ < SINGLE:3 3.AM = 7-yam:ENC 3-one
‘s/he gave me only one wretched single yam (when expecting more)’

Evaluative quantifier: GRAINS

ú-sám (3) ‘grains’:

multitude, innumerable quantity: fine grains, people, coins

17a. *ú-sám* *ú = ìy-òlǒ*
3-EQ < SINGLE:3 3.AM = 2-person:ENC
‘multitude of people’

b. *ú-sám* *ú = ì-nár*
3-EQ < SINGLE:3 3.AM = 7-money:ENC
‘multitude of money (in small units)’

Sortal vs. mensural functional overlap: LEAF & FRUIT

ú-ká / *í-ká* (3/10) ‘leaf’ & *í-tám-íy* / *á-tám* (7/6) ‘fruit’:

they also provide items that come in a formless mass with units and partitions

20a. *ú-ká* *ú* = *ù-mbăy* *ú-mòm*
3-CLF < LEAF 3.AM = 3-pudding:ENC 3-one
‘one (wrap of) pudding’

b. *í-ká* *í* = *àgìdí* *í-hàl*
10-CLF < LEAF 10.AM = 1.pap:ENC 10-two
‘two (wraps of) pap’

21a. *í-tám-íy* *í* = *brēd = ĭy* *í-mòm*
7-CLF < FRUIT-7 7.AM = 1.bread = 7.ENC 7-one
‘one (loaf of) bread’

b. *á-tám* *á* = *brě:d* *á-tāl*
6-CLF < FRUIT:6 6.AM = 1.bread:ENC 6-three
‘three (loaves of) bread’

Variability of classifiers

Several nouns, especially botanical concepts like *ì-gyāl* (9/10) ‘pepper’ and *ì-fū* (9/10) ‘fish’ like seem to be referentially vague. Classifiers are required for referential specification, i.e. for zooming in on specific parts of plants, or (variant) animal forms.

- 22a. *í-tíné* *í = ì-gyāl* *í-mòm*
5-CLF < STEM:5 5.AM = 9-hair:ENC 5-one
‘one (strand of) hair’
- b. *á-sàng* *á = ì-gyālă* *á-hâl*
6-CLF < SEED 6.AM = 9-pepper:ENC 6-two
‘two pepper fruits’
- c. *ú-ká* *ú = ì-gyālă* *ú-mòm*
3-CLF < LEAF 3.AM = 9-pepper:ENC 3-one
‘one pepper leaf’
23. *ì-kāl* *ì = ì-fú* *ì-mòm*
9-CLF < HEADPAD:99.AM = 9-fish:ENC 9-one
‘one (skewered big) fish’

Itang numeral classifiers in a Tivoid perspective (selection)

Comparison of Tivoid lexical items used as sortal quantifiers (sorted for cognacy)

Proto-Tivoid	meaning	Evand	Icheve	Itang	Tiv	Ugare
* <i>í-tíné(-í)</i> (5/6)	‘stem’	<i>ì-tìnē ~ é-tíné</i> (9/6)	<i>í-tíné ~ é-tíné</i> (5/6)	<i>í-tíné</i> (5/6)	<i>í-tíné</i> (5/6)	<i>í-tfín</i> (5/6)
[* <i>ú-gbá:</i> (3/6)]	‘branch’	<i>ò-sā ~ á-sá</i> (1/6)	??	<i>ù-gbā</i> (1/6)	[$\emptyset$ - <i>gbá:-</i> (1/6)]	<i>ú-gbá:</i> (3/6)
* <i>ú-yí</i> (3/10)	‘rope’	<i>ú-yí ~ í-yí</i> (3/10)	<i>ú-yí ~ í-yí</i> (3/10)	<i>ú-kól</i> (3/10)	-	-
* <i>ú-mèndè</i> (3/10)	‘(plant) shoot’	??	??	<i>ú-mèndē</i> (3/10)	<i>ú-mēndē</i> (3/10)	-
* <i>ù-gàlà</i> (3/6)	‘fibre’	??	??	<i>ù-gìlà</i> (1/6)	<i>g < w > à:</i> (1/6)	<i>ú-gàrí</i> (3/6)
* <i>á-sàngè(-á)</i> (??/6)	‘seed’	<i>è-sàng ~ á-sàng</i> (9/6)	<i>è-sàngē ~ á-sāngé</i> (9/6)	<i>ì-sàng</i> (9/6)	<i>ì-sàngè</i> (9/6)	<i>í-fǎy</i> (5/6)

Numeral classifiers items and functions (selection)

Range of application: examples	source meaning	Itang	Ugare	Tiv	Proto- Tivoid guess
longish outgrowth from a base (root): plantain, hair [...]	‘stem’	<i>í-tíné</i> (5/6)	<i>í-tfín</i> (5/6)	<i>í-tíné-´</i> (5/6)	<i>*í-tíné(-í)</i> (5/6)
longish (semi-)rigid outgrowth separated from its base: hair, branch, spinach [...]	‘branch’	<i>ù-gbā</i> (1/6)	<i>ú-gbá:</i> (3/6)	[$\emptyset$ - <i>gbá:-`</i> (1/6)]	[<i>*ú-gbá:</i> (3/6)]
longish flexible outgrowth separated from its base: potato, beans, cowpea [...]	‘rope’	<i>ú-kól</i> (3/10)	-	-	<i>*?? (??/??)</i>
yam (varieties) outgrowth separated from its base: potato, beans, cowpea [...]	‘(plant) shoot’	<i>ú-mèndī</i> (3/10)	-	<i>ú-mēndē</i> (3/10)	<i>*ú-mèndè</i> (3/10)

Conclusion

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

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	Itang	Ugare	Tiv
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	+	+	+	+	+

Thank you for your attention

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

Angitso & Kießling