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## A Diachronic Approach to Classes 10 and 11 in Bantu With Special Reference to North-Western Languages

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### 1. Introduction

1.1. Some Bantu languages of zone B and zone C have a class 11 noun prefix whose vowel cannot be a regular reflex of the second degree rounded vowel which has been reconstructed in Proto-Bantu for this noun prefix and for its augment. Meeussen (1967) reconstructs \*dó-dò- as the prefixal sequence for this class. Interestingly, in the languages in question, the vowel of the class 11 noun prefix is i, e, ε, ø or a, the consonant of the prefix being however a normal reflex of \*d. Languages which exhibit this phenomenon are found in the area along the borders of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Zaïre and belong to the subgroups B20, B50, B70, B80, C20, and C80 of Guthrie's classification. The class 11 noun prefix is in fact of the type:

Ca - in Kele, Ngom N, Ngom S, Mbanjwe (B20), Mbuun (B80), Bushong (C80)  
 Ci - in Wumvu, Seki (B20), Duma (B50), Yaa, Fumu (B70), Ngongo, Tsong (B80)  
 Ce - in Ndasa N, Mahongwe (B20), Mbaama (B60), Koyo, Mboshi (C20)  
 Cε - in Sake (B20), Laale (B70)  
 Cø - in Nzebi (B50)

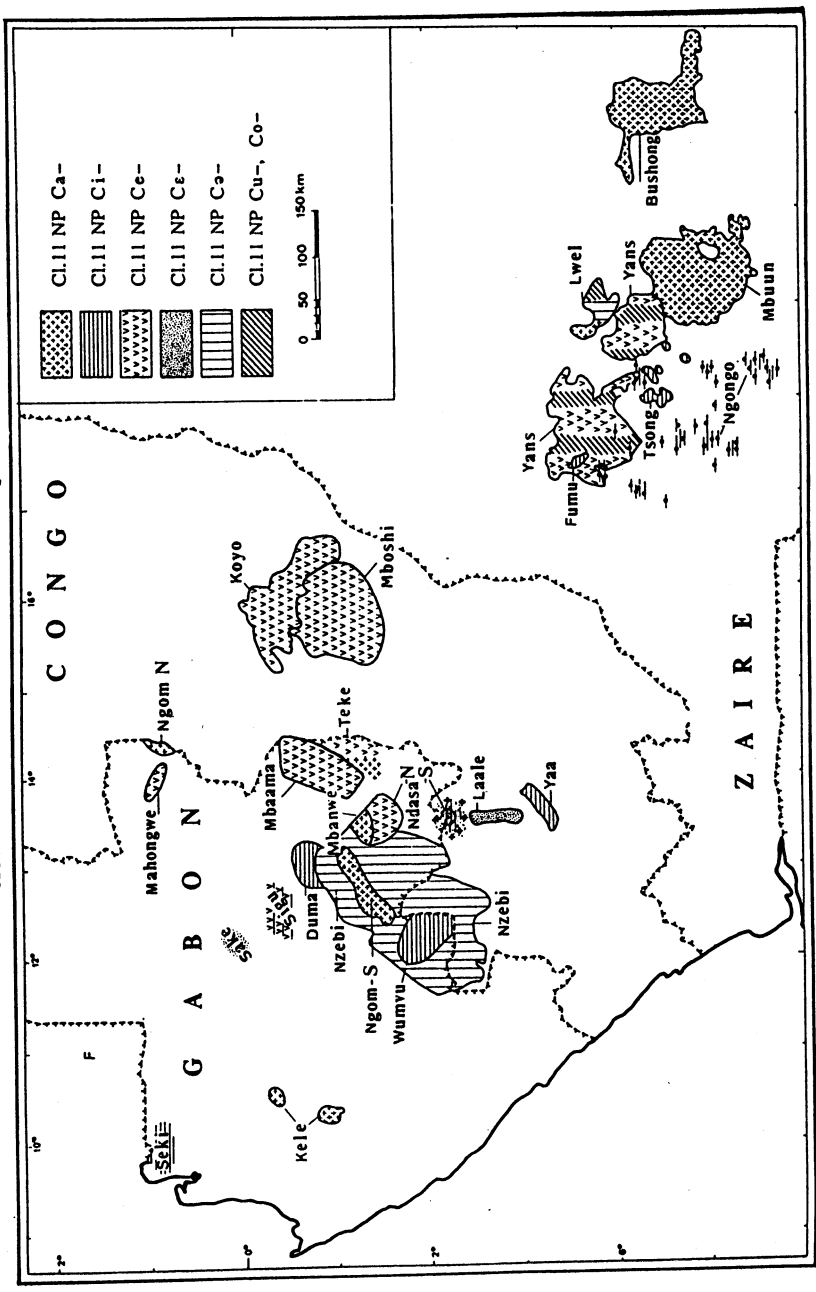
Depending on the noun considered, the prefix is *li-* or *le-* in Sigu (B20), and *lε-*, *la-*, or *li-* in Ndasa S (B20). Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that Lwel (B80) has *lu-*, *lø-*, or *la-*, whereas Yans (B80) has *lo-* or *le-* as a class 11 noun prefix, depending on the dialect considered. The same situation can be observed in a variant of Teke spoken in Gabon, where, according to Fontaney (1984), the alternation between the class 11 noun prefixes *la-* and *le-* is also due to dialectal variation.

The preceding list calls for a remark: it may be difficult to distinguish a noun prefix of class 11 *li-*, *le-*, *lø-* from a noun prefix of class 5, and it is true that both prefixes have merged in a number of languages. Therefore the list contains only languages in which the two prefixes are formally distinct or languages which, even though they have merged the two prefixes, have kept the pairings 5~11, 6 and 5~11, 10. The existence of the pairing 5~11, 10 precisely seems to show that the evolution entailed a formal confusion of the two classes rather than a substitution of class 11 by class 5 or a substitution of the pairing 11, 10 by the pairing 5, 6. In order to allow the reader to observe the aberrant class 11 prefixes, a few illustrative examples are given below:

B20	Kele	ðàsúyì	súyì	hair	cl. 5 rè-
	Mahongwe	lèhùwé	màhùwé	hair	cl. 5 i-
B50	Nzebi	ləná:nga	ná:nga	hair	cl. 5 lø-
B70	Fumu	likwi	nkwi	firewood	cl. 5 li-
	Laale	lɛlimé	ɲlimé	language	cl. 5 ø-
B80	Yans	a. lekay	nkay	leaf	cl. 5 li- / i-
		b. lokay	nkay		according to dialects

The map on next page shows where the different forms are localized.

Aberrant vowels in the class 11 noun prefix.



1.2. A comparative study should establish the causes of the observed vocalic mutations in the class 11 noun prefix. Apart from the developments which occurred later and probably determined the occurrence of vowels such as ə and ε, these mutations do not seem to be due to mere phonological change. Firstly, they did not affect all noun prefixes of the type Co-, Cu-. They sometimes appear in the noun prefix of class 13 (< \*tδ-) for which the forms ta- or ti- are found and, more rarely, in the locative noun prefix of class 17 (< \*kδ-) for which the form ka- is found; but, in all the languages investigated, the class 1 and 3 prefixes (< \*mδ-), or the prefix of class 14 (< \*bδ-) have kept a rounded vowel. Secondly, it is important to note that generally in the languages in question, the reflexes of the protovowel \*o seem to be normal.

A full understanding of the mechanisms which have brought about the aberrant forms of class 11 noun prefix presupposes, without doubt, a thorough diachronic study of the various languages where these forms appear, and in particular a good knowledge of the phonological reflexes which characterize them as well as a good knowledge of the evolution undergone by their class systems. Such a study is being carried out but has not yet reached final results. However, a reconsideration of the restructurings characterizing the pairings 9, 10 and 11, 10 in certain Bantu zones allows the formulation of interesting hypotheses concerning the appearance of divergent vowels in class 11 noun prefix. The consequent tentative hypotheses are formulated hereunder, following a close study of the evolution of the pairings 9, 10 and 11, 10 in some particular languages.

## 2. The pairings 9, 10 and 11, 10

2.1. First, it should be remembered that the prefixal sequences comprising the noun prefix and its augment are reconstructed as \*jè-*n*- for class 9 and \*d í-*n*- for class 10. These reconstructions are those proposed by Meeussen (1967) except for class 10 whose augment had been reconstructed as \*j í- at that time. The author judged later that a reconstruction \*d í- for this morpheme was more correct. We adopt this reconstruction, even if Meeussen did not defend it in any publication.

2.2. It is probably useful to reiterate some obvious facts concerning the morphemes in question. According to Meeussen, the reconstruction \*jè- for the class 9 augment could easily be replaced by \*è-, making class 9 distinct not only by the structure of its noun prefix but by its vocalic augment as well. The homophony of class 9 and 10 noun prefixes is entirely exceptional in Bantu within a singular / plural pairing.

In many current Bantu languages which have lost the augment, class 9 and 10 nouns are formally identical; the singular is no longer different from the plural. This homophony seems to be easily accepted by a number of linguistic systems, all the more as the singular / plural opposition can be maintained in the concords which frequently are differentiated by segments and / or by tones. The formal confusion of class 9 and 10 nouns can also occur in languages where the augment has generally become vocalic and where the shift from 7 to 5 vowels has merged in i- the second degree vowel which characterized the class 9 augment and the first degree vowel which characterized the class 10 augment. However, many systems disseminated in various zones have kept a formal distinction between corresponding singular class 9 nouns and plural class 10 nouns.

A few languages, even though they have acquired a vocalic augment in class 10, have retained the aperture difference inherent to the vowels of the two augments. The result is, for example:

C30	Doko	9, 10	éngúlú	íngúlú	pig
			émbúðù	ímbúðù	bird
			ékókómbè	íkókómbè	sparrowhawk

Some languages have a vocalic augment in class 9 but a CV- augment in class 10, as in:

P20	Mabiha	9, 10	indimbe	dindimbe	antelope (sp.)
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Other languages, though they have on the whole lost the augments, have nonetheless maintained the CV- augment in class 10 whose only function is to oppose formally the plural of class 10 to the singular of class 9, as in:

K30	Luyana	9, 10	ndila	tindila	path
			ngombe	tingombe	cattle
N40	Nyungwe	9, 10	mvura	zmvura	rain

The type of formal opposition which characterizes such pairings as in Mabiha, Luyana and Nyungwe may suggest a reanalysis which changes the former class 10 augment into an additive noun prefix, prefixed to that of class 9. This evolution has certainly been favoured by the CV- structure of class 10 augment, as it is identical to the canonical structure of noun prefixes in Bantu languages. Since many Bantu languages apply rules which delete the nasal prefix in certain environments depending on the initial consonants of the noun stem, it is worth noticing that the ancient class 10 augment may be the only class morpheme which is represented in the noun. If examples such as

S30	Lozi	9, 10	tau	litau	lion
			kuhu	likuhu	hen

become numerous in gender 9, 10, the language will tend to reanalyse the morpheme  $li < *d\acute{i}$  no longer as an augment but as a noun prefix of class 10.

It may happen then, that this new class 10 prefix acquires by analogy a vocalic augment  $i-$  and, possibly, becomes an autonomous noun prefix of a plural class included in a new pairing. In Zulu, for instance, the pairing 9, 10 uses the sequences  $i-n+$  and  $i-zi-n+$  with readdition of an augment  $i-$  to the ancient class 10 augment  $zi-$ , now considered to be a noun prefix. The sequence  $i-zi-$  makes the plural of class 7, with no following nasal except when the latter is found in the singular<sup>1</sup>. The result is:

S40	Zulu	9, 10	imbuzi	izimbuzi	goat
			indlu	izindlu	house
		7, 8	isilo	izilo	thing
			isifuǀa	izifuǀa	chest
			isinkwa	izinkwa	bread

The same evolution can be observed in Tswana for example, where the nasal of the class 9, 10 prefixes is directly represented with monosyllabic stems only, though it is indirectly represented with disyllabic stems through the particular nature

of the initial consonants. As in Zulu, the noun prefix *di-* of class 10 is used without a following nasal consonant to form the plural of class 7. The results are, for example:

S30	Tswana	9, 10	ḡkwè	d i ḡkwè	leopard		
			m̃phó	d i m̃phó	gift	cf. +f á	to give
			qhó s í	d i qhó s í	chief		
			pó t s ó	d i p ó t s ó	question	cf. +b ó t s á	to ask
		7, 10	s ì l à	d i l à	thing		
			s ì f ò f ù	d i f ò f ù	blind		
			s ì d i b à	d i d i b à	well		

We have therefore what some Bantuists call a class 10b, that is a class whose concords are those of class 10 but which differs from this class by the prefixal sequence used in nominal forms. In Zulu or in Tswana, these sequences are distinguished only by the presence versus the absence of the nasal consonant. But Myene-Nkomi (B11e), for example, has a prefixal sequence *i-n-* in class 10 plural of class 9, but a sequence *i-di-* in class 10b plural of a class which results from the confusion of the former classes 11, 14 and 15. Besides, it is particularly interesting to observe that a similar restructuring has occurred in a number of languages of zone S and in the languages which belong to the subgroups B10 and B30. Concerning zone B languages, authors such as Blanchon (1987) insist on the fact that the pairing 11, 10 could have played an important role in the process which led to the appearance of class 10b. The existence of a (V-)CV- sequence in class 11 could have brought about the generation, by analogy, of a prefixal sequence such as *i-di-* in the plural. This is quite possible but it must also be remarked that, in some languages, the pairing 9, 10 may contain in itself all the elements apt to give way to such a restructuring. This aspect cannot be neglected.

It is true that various analogical restructuring procedures happen within the pair 11, 10, according to two opposing tendencies which coexist more or less frequently in the same linguistic system, where they can moreover determine variants between which the speaker hesitates. The first of the two tendencies leads to the elision of the nasal prefix which characterizes the plural noun, and consequently this noun shifts to class 10b. This can be observed in a pairing like:

S40	Zulu	11, 10	u l u l i m i (u : l i m i)	i z i n d i m i	language
				o r i z i l i m i	

The second tendency on the contrary, leads to the inclusion of a nasal prefix in the singular noun, between the class 11 noun prefix and the nominal stem. This is apparent, for example, in pairings like:

D10	Lengola	11, 10	l u n d e l u	n d e l u	beard
			l u n g b í l i	n g b í l i	hair

This last case is interesting because it shows how class 11 can tend to become an autonomous class whose additive prefix is preposed to that of another class, in a complex prefixal sequence of the type CV-n+. The present paper comes back to this point at a later stage.

2.3. It is important to observe the procedures which have been used to maintain a formal difference between class 9 singular nouns and class 10 plural nouns in

languages in which the augments merged into a unique vowel which is identical in all classes (or in almost all classes).

2.3.1. Such a situation is observed, for instance, in Nyanga and in Hunde (D40 and J 50). In both languages, the augment is á- in all classes, with the exception of class 5 in Nyanga. This augment still has a grammatical function since its absence versus its presence expresses an opposition like 'indefinite versus definite'. The analysis of examples such as:

	Class 9		Class 10		Gloss
	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite	Definite	
Nyanga	mbúra ncangi	ámúra áncangi	mbúra ncangi	ásámúra ásáncangi	rain cloth
Hunde	ngóko	ángóko	ngóko	ásángóko	hen

shows that class 9 and class 10 nouns are identical when indefinite, but that they are formally distinct when definite. It shows particularly that in the definite plural, the two languages use what can be diachronically analysed as an accumulation of augments since the prefixal sequence comprises a first unified augment á-, a class 10 augment sí- and a second unified augment á- which precedes the prefixal nasal. In Ronga (S50), which also has a unified augment a-, the augment of the nasal prefix does not appear in the class 10 form and we have for instance a t imbut i 'goats'. Conversely, in Nyanga and in Hunde, the class 9 augment á- is maintained after the ancient class 10 augment. This last morpheme is, to some extent, analysed as an additive prefix since it is preceded by another augment á-. Interestingly enough, Nyanga and Hunde maintain also the á- augment of noun prefixes when these morphemes are preceded by diminutive prefixes of classes 12, 13 or by augmentative prefixes of classes 7, 8. As a result, we obtain:

D40	Nyanga	kámut í cámut í	t wámut í byámut í	small tree big tree
J 50	Hunde	kákúbóko kyákúbóko	t wámábóko byámábóko	small arm big arm

One could argue that the maintenance of the augment after an additive prefix is not frequent in Bantu languages. However, we showed elsewhere (Grégoire 1975) that these languages, in a former stage of their evolution, probably retained the augment of the noun prefix after an additive locative prefix. Moreover, in a number of languages, additive prefixes (diminutive or augmentative) have a long vowel. Consequently, a thorough study may well prove that, if in some languages the class 13 noun prefix has a vowel which is not a first or second degree rounded vowel as would be expected from the reconstruction \*t ð-, it is because it has incorporated into its own structure the vocalic augment which it preceded in a previous stage of the evolution. This hypothesis seems to be backed up by alternations such as:

K50	Phende	12, 13	gáákází gáámulúmé	túúkází téémilúmé	small wife small male
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in which the class 13 noun prefix has a normal vowel when it is not followed by another prefix but can have an aberrant vowel in the presence of a following prefix.

2.3.2. It is also important to observe how a number of languages in zones R, K and H have reacted to the necessity of maintaining a formal distinction between class 9 nouns and class 10 nouns. In Herero, Nkhumbi, Nyaneka, Mbundu S (R), Kwangali (K) and in a particular variant of Mbundu N (H) spoken near Amboim, a vocalic unified augment *o-* is used in almost all classes. Entirely frozen, the augment *o-* is included in the noun prefix and has no grammatical function. In Kwangali (K), Nyaneka and Nkhumbi (R), the following forms are found:

K30	Kwangali	9, 10	<i>nzira</i>	<i>nonzira</i>	path
			<i>mbwa</i>	<i>nombwa</i>	dog
			<i>hühwā</i>	<i>nohühwā</i>	hen
R10	Nyaneka	9, 10	<i>ongombe</i>	<i>onongombe</i>	cattle
			<i>ofufua</i>	<i>onofufua</i>	hen
	Nkhumbi	9, 10	<i>ongolo</i>	<i>onongolo</i>	knee
			<i>osefe</i>	<i>onosefe</i>	trial

None of these languages has a reflex *\*d > n* and the prefixal sequence attested in class 10 cannot therefore contain a reflex of the ancient augment *\*d í-* proper to this class. It seems rather that it is the sequence Augment + class 10 NP *o-n-* which could have been treated as additive with regard to the class 9 homophone sequence. In Kwangali, where, unlike what happens in zone R, the general augment *o-* is latent and manifests itself only in particular syntactic contexts, we effectively obtain *n<sup>o</sup>onzira* 'with the path (cl. 9)' and *eyuvi limwe ly<sup>o</sup>nomfi* 'a thousand fishes (cl.10)'. However, the augment generally does not appear after additive prefixes as we see in: *kangombe*, *tungombe* 'small cow(s)', *kambwa*, *tumbwa* 'small dog(s)'. We may thus suppose that the representation of the class 9 augment *o-* within the class 10 sequence (*o*)*non-* is due to the consonantal structure of the two noun prefixes and hence to syllabification constraints. Furthermore, it will be noted that examples such as

K30	Kwangali	9, 10	<i>hühwā</i>	<i>nohühwā</i>	hen
R10	Nyaneka	9, 10	<i>ofufua</i>	<i>onofufua</i>	hen
		11, 10	<i>oluhuki</i>	<i>onohuki</i>	hair

show that the class 9 augment *o-* is kept when a rule deletes the nasal consonant which was its original prefixal support. This procedure tends to create a class 10 prefixal sequence (*o-*)*no-* where this augment is integrated into a (V-)CV structure.

In Herero and in Mbundu S, the pairings 9, 10 appear as follows:

R30	Herero	9, 10	<i>ongombe</i>	<i>ozongombe</i>	cattle
R10	Mbundu S	9, 10	<i>ónjíla</i>	<i>ólonjíla</i>	path
			<i>ómbwá</i>	<i>ólobmwá</i>	dog
			<i>ongombe</i>	<i>olongombe</i>	cattle

It can be observed that in these languages, the restructuring process which reaches the class 10 prefixal sequence is similar to the one observed in Zulu or in the definite forms of Nyanga and Hunde. Once again, class 10 is characterized by what can be historically analysed as an accumulation of augments. Its prefixal sequence seems in fact to include a unified augment *o-*, an ancient class 10 augment *\*d í-*, another unified augment *o-* and a nasal prefix. Concerning Mbundu S for instance, the following restructuring process is suggested:



	dí -	ñ +
o -	li -	o - n +
o -	l -	o - n +
	└───┬───┘	
o -	lo -	n +

Along with this restructuring process, an additive class 10 prefix *o1o-* is created. It will be noted that in Mbundu S, the class 11 noun prefix is *o1u-* so that only the aperture degree of the second vowel allows one to distinguish the singular from the plural in pairings 11, 10 such as:

R10	Mbundu S	<i>o1umati</i>	<i>o1omati</i>	rib
		<i>o1unhihi</i>	<i>o1onhihi</i>	bee
		<i>o1uhwĩ</i>	<i>o1ohwĩ</i>	firewood

The dialectal variant of Mbundu N (H) spoken near Amboim has a class 10 prefixal sequence which is interesting due to the nature of its second vowel. The following examples are quoted from da Silva Maia (1964):

H20	Mbuim	9, 10	<i>mbuli</i>	<i>o1ambuli</i>	goat
			<i>ngombe</i>	<i>o1angombe</i>	cattle
		11, 10	<i>luhwĩ</i>	<i>o1ahwĩ</i>	firewood
			<i>olupaji</i>	<i>o1apaji</i>	rib
			<i>lunzwana</i>	<i>lanzwana</i>	nail, claw
			<i>lukamba</i>	<i>lakamba</i>	bird of prey (sp.)

In this prefixal sequence, the vowel *a-* recalls what we observed in the prefixal sequences *ásán+* of Nyanga and Hunde. Yet, these two languages have a generalized augment *á-*, which is found neither in Mbundu N nor in the variant of this language spoken in Amboim. The ultimate problem is thus to determine the origin of the prefixal sequence  $(o)1a(N)+$  which tends to produce a class 10 prefixal morpheme *la-*, as it can be observed in: *lukamba* pl. *lakamba* 'bird of prey (sp)' and *kanji1a* pl. *kalanji1a* 'small bird', *kasanjipl.* *kalanjanji* 'small hen'.

Two remarks found in the descriptions lead to an interesting hypothesis. Authors point out that in Kwangali (K) and in Mbuim (H), there are two alternating plural forms for class 9 nouns (or for some of them). They give the following examples:

K30	Kwangali	<i>mphuku</i>	<i>nomphuku</i>	or	<i>vamphuku</i>	rat
		<i>nzovu</i>	<i>nonzovu</i>	or	<i>banzovu</i> <sup>2</sup>	elephant
		<i>ngwe</i>	<i>nongwe</i>	or	<i>bangwe</i>	leopard
H20	Mbuim	<i>ngombe</i>	<i>olangombe</i>	or	<i>angombe</i>	cattle

The second of these alternating plural forms has a more collective meaning and uses a prefixal sequence which comprises an additive class 2 prefix represented by a CV-form derived from *\*bà-* in Kwangali and by a vocalic form which resembles an augment in Mbuim. Da Silva Maia explicitly points out that there is a clear-cut tendency to replace the plural prefix *la-* by *a-*. However, the mere existence of the sequence *o1a-* indicates, on the contrary, that the class 2+9 plural form is probably ancient and that the vowel *a-* is in fact included in a prefixal sequence which multiplies additional augments and which is hence similar to those observed in zones K and R. Therefore, the prefixal sequence attested here probably comprises a



### 3. The aberrant forms of the class 11 noun prefix

3.1. Languages in which class 11 noun prefixes are characterized by an aberrant vowel no longer have an augment as such. Generally, they nonetheless contain numerous traces of this morpheme. For instance, they not infrequently have an alternation between a CV- form and a V- form of the noun prefix, the choice between these two allomorphs depending on the structure of the following stem and on the nature of its initial segment. The alternation between them seems to be due to the fact that the former V-CV- prefixal sequence has been reduced to the vocalic augment when it preceded a stem with an initial consonant, but to the CV- prefix when it preceded a stem with an initial vowel or, in certain languages, a monosyllabic stem. In such systems where the choice between the V- and the CV- allomorphs of the noun prefixes depends on the nature of the following segment, one might expect that an additive prefix, which is most of the time preposed to the V- allomorph of the noun prefix, would be frozen in a CV- form which is then generalized. In Koyo for instance, where all noun prefixes other than n+ have a vocalic representation before stems with an initial consonant and before nasal prefixes, it is remarkable that the class 11 noun prefix has a constant form *le-* and that it is the only noun prefix in the system which has no vocalic allomorph. So we have:

C20	Koyo	1, 2	mo ro	ba ro	person
			mwána	bána	child
			okondzi	akondzi	chief
			ngubú	angubú	hippopotamus
		11, 10	lekóꞑi	kóꞑi	firewood
			l embándzi	mbándzi	rib

Similarly in the B20 languages, where the vocalic representations of noun prefixes are not rare in singular classes, the class 11 noun prefix has a V- structure only in those languages where it is characterized by a rounded vowel reflecting the reconstructed vowel. But in all the languages in which its vowel is *i*, *e*, *ɛ* or *a*, it has the CV- structure which can be expected if it were previously preposed to a vowel. Thus we have<sup>3</sup>:

B20	Kota	ʒ húwè	húwè	hair
	Pove	ʒ lémè	lémè	language
but:	Kele	ðàsúyì	súyì	hair
	Ngom N	lásúì	súì	hair
	Ngom S	yàsúyì	súyì	hair
	Wumvu	lèsùyí	sùyí	hair
	Sigu	l íkúꞑì	kúꞑì	firewood
	Ndasa N	l è l ímì	mà l ímì	language
	Ndasa S	l è l ímì	mà l ímì	language
	Mahongwe	l è hùwé	mà hùwé	hair
	Sake	l è d é m ì	m è d é m ì	language

3.2. Another general observation concerns the languages in which the class 11 prefix has a vowel which is not a regular reflex of \*o-. Most of these languages have a tendency to redistribute in gender 1, 2 the nouns which historically belong to gender 9, 10, especially when they designate animals. Class 9 retains only nouns designating objects and, not infrequently, these nouns make their plural with an additive prefix preposed to the nasal prefix. Languages such as Koyo, Mboshi, Mbaama, Fumu and all the B20 languages have completely lost the pairing 9, 10 and make the plural of class 9 nouns in class 6+n. As examples, we have:

C20	Koyo	ndziá	andziá	path
		mbóga	ambóga	country
B60	Mbaama	ntulu	antulu	chest
B70	Fumu	nzo	manzo	house
B20	Mahongwe	mbókà	màmbókà	village
	Sake	ŋkúúrù	mèŋkúúrù	strength

In all these languages, class 10 is only associated with nouns which appear in class 11 as well, but the same tendency is also manifest in other languages where the class 11 noun prefix is aberrant, even when the 9, 10 pairing has not yet completely disappeared.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that all the reviewed languages, without exception, do have the same prefixal sequence in class 9 and in class 10 (associated with class 11). This sequence is reduced to a nasal consonant which is deleted by rule in a high number of cases, in particular when the stem begins with a voiceless consonant. Such rules have probably favoured the redistribution of many class 9 nouns and, for the nouns remaining in this class, the generalisation of plural forms with an additive class 6 prefix.

3.3. It is also clear that in zones H, B or C, class 11 has a singulative semantic value. This class is used to derive nouns designating single objects, the collection of which is named as such by a corresponding noun in class 10 or in some cases in class 6(+n). Various authors note explicitly that the so-called pairing 11, 10 (or 11, 6+n) does not constitute a pairing as such, in which a singular is opposed to a plural. For instance, when observing the situation in Mboshi where the pairing 9, 10 no longer exists, Prat (1917) writes: 'Avec certains substantifs, le préfixe 1e- opère une véritable soustraction pour distinguer séparément un des éléments d'une combinaison complexe ou d'une collectivité marquée par la forme du pluriel, plus usitée ici que le singulier'. The following translations, some of them given by the author, can be proposed:

	<u>Cl. 11</u>		<u>Cl. 10</u>	
C20 Mboshi	1ekoŋi	a log	koŋi	firewood
	1esue	one hair	sue	hair
	1epanda	one scabie's pimple	panda	scabies
	1endugu	a grain of pepper	ndugu	pepper
	1endeli	one hair of a beard	ndeli	a beard
	1engunga	one hair	ngunga	fur

In having a collective meaning, class 10 nouns are semantically similar to singulars. Moreover, they are formally identical to class 9 nouns and, as gender 9, 10 has disappeared, there exist in the languages no more class 10 nouns designating countable objects with a plural meaning. The examples above show clearly that

class 11 might easily have been reinterpreted as an autonomous class with an additive prefix, apt to be preposed to a class 10 noun prefix, then to a class 9 noun prefix, and later to other singular prefixes. If this first hypothesis is correct, it is then imaginable that the additive class 11 noun prefix could have incorporated into its own structure either the vocalic augments of class 10 and 9, or the vocalic noun prefixes proper to other singular classes.

In order to determine the exact origin of the incorporated vowels, one should consider the facts inherent to each particular system, which is not an easy task. According to the languages, the same incorporated vowel can have different origins and it should be recalled that, in zone B, the reduction of noun prefixes to simple vowel markers has created ambiguities which favoured the migration of nouns from one to another class or pairing. For instance, a class 11 noun prefix such as *li-* can possibly result from the incorporation of a class 10 or 9 augment, but also from the incorporation of a vocalic prefix belonging either to class 5, 7, 19, or even 10b. A lot of work is thus still to be done in order to check the relevance of the above hypotheses. But these are credible and two observations from the B 20 languages seem to reinforce their plausibility. First, two languages in this group, Sigu and Ndasas, have multiple allomorphs for class 11 noun prefix, which differ only by their vowel as we see in:

B20	Sigu	11, 6	<i>lékááyì</i>	<i>mákááyì</i>	leaf
		11, 8	<i>lìnjédì</i>	<i>bìnjédì</i>	beard
		11, 10	<i>líkúñì</i>	<i>kúúñì</i>	firewood
B20	Ndasas	11, 6	<i>làkáyì</i>	<i>màkáyì</i>	leaf
			<i>lèlìmi</i>	<i>màlìmi</i>	language
		11, 10	<i>lèsùyí</i>	<i>sùyí</i>	hair
			<i>lìyìsí</i>	<i>bìyìsí</i>	bone

It should be noted that in Sigu, *li-* is also the class 5 prefix. However, in other languages, *lìnjédì* and *líkúñì* belong mostly to class 11 and in Sigu, they make their plural in class 8 and 10 respectively, which indicates rather a formal confusion between the noun prefixes of classes 5 and 11 (or perhaps  $11 + 7i-$ ), and not a mere reclassification of the two nouns in class 5. In Ndasas, the prefix of class 5 is *ri-*. Prefixes *là-* and *lì-* are analysed by Jacquot (1983) as class 13 and class 19 respectively, but this analysis seems to be misleading since the reflex  $*t > 1$  is not observed in the language and since a change  $*p > 1$  is quite impossible.

The second observation is that those B20 languages which have a class 11 noun prefix with a non-alternating *a* vowel are also the only ones which have kept tangible traces of class 12  $*kà-$ . In those languages, class 12 merged with class 7 whose prefix is *a-* before stems with an initial consonant and *gy-* before stems with an initial vowel. It is clear that the first allomorph belongs historically to class 12, whereas the second one belongs historically to class 7.

Such a coincidence is not likely to have occurred by mere chance. On the contrary the coexistence of an *a-* prefix in class 7 and a *Ca-* prefix in class 11 is explainable if these languages were using class 11 as additive with regard to class 12 to express such meanings as 'only one little piece of..' and if this additive use led later to the appearance of a frozen *Ca-* form. Consistently the *Ca-* form is not attested in those B20 languages which have completely lost class 12. Furthermore, the existence of a link between class 11 and the merger of classes 7 and 12 seems to be confirmed by the Teke variant described by Fontaney (1984) where the class 7 prefix is alternatively *ga-* or *ge-* and the class 11 prefix is *la-* or *le-*.

#### 4. Conclusions

So far we have shown that :

1. The structural asymmetry between both terms of a pairing offers the possibility of a reanalysis according to which the CV- prefix appearing initially within one of the two terms is interpreted as the prefix of an autonomous class.
2. An additive prefix (which might have had this status originally or have acquired it by restructuring) can be proposed to a noun whose prefix has maintained its vocalic augment or has itself acquired a V- structure.
3. The additive prefix can then allow incorporation of the following vowel (let it be an augment or a prefix) into its own structure, to the detriment of its original vowel.
4. By a restructuring which occurs in the pairing 11, 10, the class 11 noun prefix can be reanalysed as an additive prefix which is proposed to the class 10 prefix.
5. In languages where the pairing 9, 10 has disappeared or has a tendency to disappear, a class 10 noun associated with a class 11 noun acquires a collective meaning, similar to the meaning of a class 9 singular noun, from which it is no longer formally distinct.
6. The singulative meaning of class 11 agrees easily with the status of an autonomous class, whose prefix is additive with regard to class 10 collective nouns.
7. Many of the languages, which show an aberrant vowel in their class 11 prefix have two allomorphs for their noun prefixes: a V- allomorph which is represented before the nasal prefix or before consonant-initial stems, and a CV- allomorph which is represented before vowel initial stems and, in some languages, before monosyllabic stems.
8. In these languages, the class 11 noun prefix has a constant CV- form and may be the only one which has no V- allomorph.

Synchronically, in the languages where its vowel is aberrant, there seems to be no reason to consider the class 11 noun prefix as an additive one. Nevertheless it is reasonable to suppose that, in a former stage of the evolution, it has been reanalysed as such and proposed first to the prefix of class 10, then to that of class 9, and later to those of other singular classes.

Being mostly used in prevocalic position, it could have retained its CV- structure and could have incorporated the following vowel. This process could have created frozen representations which are characterized by variable vowels and may not be unaccounted by a regular phonological change.

#### Notes

1. In Zulu, *zi-* is the regular reflex of *\*di-*. It cannot be a reflex the class 8 noun prefix *\*bi-* since *\*b > z* only if followed by a sequence *..iV...* So we have: *\*+biad-* 'to give birth' > *+zəl-*, but *\*+bim-* 'to swell' > *+vim-*.
2. The class 2 noun prefix of Kwangali is noted to be *va-* by Dammann (1957) but *ba-* by Westphal (1958).
3. All the cited forms are from Jacquot (1983). They are reproduced as such, even if the word for 'language' in Pove is to be corrected as *olémə* (R. Mickala, personal communication). In addition, the alternation between *ú* and *úú* in the Sigu words for 'firewood' does not seem to be normal. It will be noticed that in Ngom S, *y* seems to be one of the reflexes for *\*d*.

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