

THE CICIPU NOUN CLASS SYSTEM

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This article describes the noun class system of Cicipu, a Benue-Congo language spoken in northwest Nigeria. The nine noun classes and associated genders are presented, along with a discussion of their morphological properties and semantic coherence. Features of special note include the alternation between gender and person subject agreement, the class 8 prefix allomorph that consists simply of a consonant weight unit, and prefix epenthesis before long consonants in class 5. The article also includes sections on gender resolution, agreement with atypical controllers, and the classification of loanwords.

Cet article décrit le système de classes nominales du Cicipu, langue Benue-Congo parlée au Nigéria du nord-ouest. Les neuf classes nominales et les genres associés sont présentés, avec une discussion de leurs propriétés morphologiques et cohérence sémantique. Les traits à noter particulièrement incluent l'alternance entre l'accord sujet de genre et de personne, l'allomorphe du préfixe de la classe 8 qui consiste simplement en une unité de poids consonantique, et l'épenthèse du préfixe devant les consonnes longues dans la classe 5. L'article inclut également des sections sur la résolution de genre, l'accord avec les contrôleurs atypiques, et la classification des mots d'emprunt.

0. INTRODUCTION

This article describes the noun class system of Cicipu¹, a Benue-Congo language of northwest Nigeria. Cicipu is spoken by approximately 20,000 people (CAPRO 1995) in a contiguous area divided between Sakaba Local Government Area in Kebbi State, and Kontagora Local Government Area in Niger State. Virtually all Acipu speak Hausa fluently, and Cicipu has been strongly influenced by the lingua franca in both its lexicon and grammar. It is part of the West Kainji subgroup of Benue-Congo (Gerhardt 1989), and is most closely related to the Kambari cluster within that group. The only previous linguistic publication on the language is a 228-item wordlist (Dettweiler and Dettweiler 2002).

Native speakers recognise seven dialects of Cicipu, all of which are mutually intelligible. The data in this paper is from the Tirisino dialect and was collected during the author's fieldtrips to the area from September 2006 to March 2007, and from January to April 2008. The analysis is based on approximately six hours of transcribed text together with elicited recordings of seven hundred nouns from the SIL Comparative African Wordlist (Snider and Roberts 2004).

1. PHONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

1.1 PHONEMIC INVENTORY

Cicipu has an asymmetric six-vowel system with four diphthongs. Each vowel has a nasal counterpart, and vowel length is also contrastive.

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Table 1: Vowel phonemes

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Mid-close	e/ei/eu		o
Mid-open			ɔ
Open		a/ai/au	

There is no mid or high central vowel, unlike many other West Kainji languages. Within the Kambari cluster, Central Kambari (Hoffman 1963, 1965, Crozier 1984) has three central vowels, whereas Tsuvadi (probably Cicipu's closest relative) apparently has the same vowel inventory as Cicipu (Blench n.d.).

Consonants worthy of note are /**ɓ**/, /**ɗ**/, /**ʔ**/, /**ʔʷ**/, /**ʔʲ**/, and /**hʷ**/. All of these are found in other West Kainji languages, although /**ʔʲ**/ is limited to Cicipu and Kambari. Notable omissions are **kp**, **gb**, **ʃ**, **f**, and **ŋ**.

Table 2: Consonant phonemes

Plosives	p b	t d	k kʷ g gʷ	ʔ ʔʷ ʔʲ
Implosives	ɓ	ɗ		
Affricates			tʃ dʒ	
Fricatives		v	s z	
Nasals	m	n		
Lateral		l		
Flap		ɾ		
Approx.			j	w

In this paper the affricates /**tʃ**/ and /**dʒ**/ are represented by **c** and **j** respectively, while the approximant /**j**/ is written **y**. Nasal vowels are written with an **n** following the vowel, as in **ùkwáan** [ùkʷá:] 'skin'.² Glottal stops appear as an apostrophe '.

Cicipu has two contrastive level tones: high (H) and low (L). Falling (HL) tones do occur but can usually be analysed as a sequence of H plus L.

1.2 LONG CONSONANTS

Long consonants can occur root-initially in nouns, and root-medially in all word classes. Any consonant can be lengthened. Long consonants can also arise as a consequence of morphophonemic processes, in particular the formation of class 8 nouns. The class 8 lengthening prefix will be written as an underspecified consonant **C-**, since its application results in the lengthening of the first consonant of the stem.

1.3 VOWEL HARMONY

There is widespread vowel harmony in Cicipu. The vowel set {**o**, **ɔ**, **e**, **a**} are mutually exclusive in roots, regardless of word class. So if a root contains /**a**/, its other vowels must come only from the set {**a**, **i**, **u**}, /**e**/ only occurs with {**e**, **i**, **u**}, and so on. The vowel harmony system operates throughout the lexicon, without exception apart from some compounds and Hausa loans. Certain nominal and verbal affixes harmonise according to the same pattern, including noun and agreement prefixes for classes 1, 2 and 4. In this paper such vowels will be written **A** as in **kA-**.

² The exception is nasal consonants occurring before non-continuants e.g. **ù-lénjǎ** [ùléndʒǎ] 'sun'. In such cases VN sequences are to be interpreted as a nasal vowel followed by a nasal consonant.

2. NOUN CLASSES

The precise number of noun classes in Cicipu depends on the criteria we use to distinguish them. If the prefix borne by the noun is the deciding factor, then there are ten (morphological) noun classes. However two of these classes share the same agreement markers, and so it can also be argued that there are nine (syntactic³) noun classes. In Benue-Congo noun class studies syntactic noun classes which share the same prefix are generally assigned the same number, but distinguished by a following letter (e.g. 3a, 3b). This is the approach that will be followed here.

The Cicipu noun class system is very similar to those found in the Kambari languages, especially Western Kambari (Stark 2004), and here I have followed the (arbitrary) numbering system used by Hoffman (1963) and Crozier (1984) for Central Kambari. It should be noted that the class numbers bear no relation to the Bleek-Meinhof system used for Bantu languages. The following table summarises the Cicipu prefixes together with their Central Kambari equivalents:

Table 3: Cicipu prefixes and their Central Kambari equivalents

Class	Prefix	Example	Gloss	Central Kambari equivalent
1	kA-	kà-bára kò-kóon kò-jóo kè-téré kò-óóí	elder egg lizard bone he-goat	AA-
2	A-	à-bára ò-kóon ò-jóo è-téré ò-óóí	elders eggs lizards bones he-goats	A-
3a	i-/y-	ì-námà ì-dáa ì-dô y-óomò	meat ground horses monkeys	i-/y-
3b	ri-	rì-pízì rì-hyán'àn ru-úsì	altar arrow rainy season	
4	mA-	mà-díyá mò-tóo mò-kóotó mè-pésé mà-nnú	hare chick kitchen hut twin bird	mA-

³ See Bokamba (1993) for the useful terminological distinction between morphological and syntactic noun classes.

5	N-, mi-	ṇ-díyá ṇ-tó ṇ-kóotó ṇ-pésé mì-nnú	hares chicks kitchen huts twins birds	N-, mi-
6	ti-, tu-, ci-, cu-	tì-sín'ín tù-mócì cì-lúu cù-kúlú ci-íyá	hair friendship leopard tortoise flour	tsi-
7	u-/w-	ù-pépi ù-kómó ù-lénjí wó-óvó	wind salt sun fear	u-/w-
8	Ø-, C-, v-	Ø-cìccérè Ø-híi'òo c-có'ò k-kámbà d-dô vó-ómò	star insect, k.o. sheep rib horse monkey	Ø-, C-, v-
9	ku-/kw-	kù-cígà kù-cínó kù-míná kwe-étú	cockerel back cloth medicine	u-/w-

The major difference between Cicipu and Central Kambari is the preservation in the former of the Proto-Benue-Congo class **ku-* (De Wolf 1971), labelled 'class 9' here. In Central (but not Western) Kambari the /*k*/ has been lost and so the class has merged with class 7. Detailed discussion of the prefixes and their allomorphs is deferred until §4, since it relies on an understanding of the various pairings (or genders) which are found in the language.

3. NOUN GENDERS

3.1 OVERVIEW

The term GENDER in Benue-Congo studies is typically used to refer to the combination of prefixes which occur with any given noun. Most nouns take one prefix in the singular, and another in the plural, in which case they are said to belong to DOUBLE CLASS genders. Nouns which do not make this distinction are said to form SINGLE CLASS genders, and usually these are either abstract or have meanings normally associated with mass nouns.

The basic structure of the Cicipu gender system is most easily demonstrated through an affix net, as shown in Figure 1 below. The lines represent double class genders, and the prefixes given are agreement prefixes. **C** and **A** represent consonant and vowel weight units respectively, the phonetic values of which are determined by the root to which they are attached. Single class genders are represented by underscores.

Class 1, 3b, 4, 6, 7 and 9 prefixes occur with singular nouns.

Class 2, 3a and 5 prefixes occur with plural nouns.

Class 8 prefixes can occur with either singular or plural nouns.

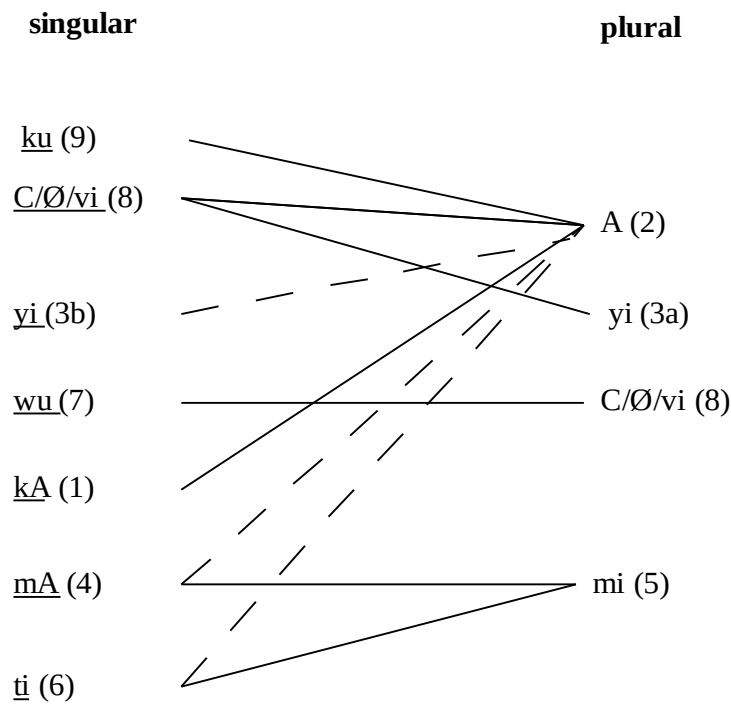


Figure 1: Cicipu gender system

In total there are ten double class genders, seven of which are fairly well established (seventeen or more items). The other three (shown with dotted lines on the diagram) are inquate genders (Corbett 1991: 170-175) with only a very few members. As well as the double class genders, classes 1 and 3-9 make up eight single class genders. One noun **à-húlá** 'name' takes a class 2 prefix and triggers class 2 agreement, regardless of whether it is being used with singular or plural meaning. Therefore it should be considered as belonging to an inquate single class gender.

3.2 GENDER LISTING

This section provides examples from each of the genders, along with a discussion of their semantic structure. Double class genders are treated first, then single class genders.

3.2.1 Gender 4/5

(1) Gender 4/5: **ma-/N-**

mà-kwá'á	orphan	ñ-kwá'á	orphans
mà-lálá	puppy	ñ-lálá	puppies
mò-'yó'yó	fish	ñ-'yó'yó	fish (pl.)
mà-sín'yán	nipple	ñ-sín'yán	nipples

The gender has a clear semantic coherence. Most obviously, it contains a large number of nouns relating to small objects. In particular words for small animals and birds, and words for young animals and humans occur in this gender. Round things and hand-held tools also cluster in this class. The word **mà-gáin** 'sword' denotes a relatively large object, and this may suggest that gender 4/5 extends to hand-held implements regardless of size. Compare also **kà-gísi** 'stick' (1/2) with **mè-gísi** 'walking-stick' (4/5). Similarly **mà-kápá** 'large calabash' may be classified here because its denotatum is round rather than small. Some words for disabled humans (**mò-gútù** 'leper/cripple', **mà-gwáwá** 'mute') also belong to this class.

While the referents of most gender 4/5 nouns intuitively seem to be 'small', there are actually three different states of affairs which give rise to this perception. First of all, many, perhaps most, of its members denote small objects, where by 'small' I mean in some vague absolute sense i.e. 'smaller than most things'. Words such as **mé-bbèrísè** 'swift [i.e. the bird]', **mè-gémí** 'knuckle', and **mà-bàsà** 'mole [on skin]' fall into this category.

Secondly, nouns typically occurring in some other gender may be given 4/5 prefixes if the speaker wants to suggest a smaller object than the hearer would otherwise expect. For example **y-yénè** 'catfish' (8/3a) is a generic term (borrowed from Hausa) covering catfish of all sizes, but **mè-yénè** (4/5) denotes a small catfish, and it would be inappropriate to use this word to refer to any other kind. In this case there is a transparent relationship between a noun with 4/5 prefixes and its counterpart in another gender, and the process is very productive, allowing speakers to readily create novel words.

Thirdly, there may be a standing relationship between two nouns in the lexicon, sharing the same root but differing in their genders. There may not be a predictable semantic relation between them, but the 4/5 noun almost always has connotations of 'smallness' in some way, although perhaps only with respect to its counterpart. This kind of relationship can be thought of as more derivational and less inflectional than that discussed in the previous paragraph. Examples include:

(2) mò-ccókó	pocket	kò-ccókó (1/2)	bag
mà-sín'yán	nipple	kà-sín'yán (1/2)	breast
mò-tóo	chick	kù-tóo (9/2)	hen

The borrowed words **mà-karántáa** 'school', **mà-llû** 'master', **mà-búdí** 'key', **má-gàjì** 'priest', **mà-záanì** 'pen', **mò-zóorí** 'cat', **mò-gúugí** 'brush' and **mà-'áná** 'meaning' all begin with **ma-** in Hausa, and these were presumably assigned to this gender because of their phonological resemblance to existing 4/5 words. Other than loanwords, it is hard to find words that do not fit semantically. **Mò-kóotó** 'kitchen' is a candidate, although a kitchen hut may be smaller than a normal hut. Similarly **mè-ttégù** 'shirt' (from Hausa *taggo*) may have originally referred to an item of clothing shorter than the Hausa *riga*. I do not have an explanation for **mà-sítá** 'large wooden support'.

A small group of irregular nouns belong to gender 4/5 according to their agreement properties, although they are not straightforwardly composed of prefix plus root:

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| (3) | méngétikká | young girl | míntikká | young girls |
| | méngétàarì | young boy | míntàarì | young boys |
| | móo | child | múu | children |

3.2.2 Gender 1/2

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| (4) | Gender 1/2: kA-/A- | | | |
| | kà-búngú | snake | à-búngú | snakes |
| | kè-téré | bone | è-téré | bones |
| | kò-cílò | abdomen | ò-cílò | abdomens |
| | kò-ḡóon | axe | ò-ḡóon | axes |

Gender 1/2 is by far the largest gender, just as in the Kambari languages. There has been a lot of movement into this gender from the others (De Wolf 1971: 62), and so it has lost much of any semantic coherence it once had. Nevertheless the gender can have connotations of large size, and the inflectional and derivational relationships discussed under gender 4/5 can both be found:

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| (5) | kà-ttílú | burial pot (large) | mà-ttílú (4/5) | pot |
| | kà-nnú | hawk | mà-nnú (4/5) | bird |
| | kè-yénè | large catfish | y-yénè (8/3a) | catfish |
| | kà-dángà | large piece of wood | ù-dángà (7/8) | tree/piece of wood |

This does not seem to be as productive as the 4/5 diminutive, and I have only observed a few cases, usually in opposition to a word normally occurring in gender 4/5.

3.2.3 Gender 6/5

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| (6) | Gender 6/5: ci-/N- | | | |
| | cì-yóo | yam | ñ-yóo | yams |
| | cì-cîin | forehead | ñ-cîin | foreheads |
| | cì-réenè | fireplace | ñ-réenè | fireplaces |
| | cì-kó'ùn | chest | ñ-kó'ùn | chests |

This gender is not found in Kambari, and is a relatively small one in Cicipu. It contains central body parts (**cì-cîin** 'forehead', **cì-kó'ùn** 'chest', **cù-kûun** 'waist', **cì-llú** 'neck'), certain miscellaneous (and perhaps unusual) animals (**cù-kúlú** 'tortoise', **cù-kúndú** 'hyena', **tì-zàarúmà** 'flea', **cì-yúu** 'porcupine', **cì-lúu** 'leopard', **tì-jímà** 'male warthog'), a few words to do with farming (**cì-níyáa** 'farm', **cì-yóo** 'yam', **cì-yú'ú** 'big hoe') plus three others: **cì-yímbì** 'dark', **cì'-ádì** 'trap' and **cì-réenè** 'fireplace'.

3.2.4 Gender 7/8

(7) Gender 7/8: **u-/C-**

ù-lénjí	sun/day	l-lénjí	days
ù-pépí	wind	p-pépí	winds
ù-yáa	road	y-yáa	roads
ù-dǎngà	tree	d-dǎngà	trees

Gender 7/8 contains several nouns denoting places (**ù-ré** ‘town’, **ù-yáa** ‘road’, **ù-rédù** ‘nest’ and the word for ‘place’ itself **‘ásù’**⁴), some abstracts (**ù-jíin** ‘expense’, **ù-kôo** ‘death’, **ù-nén’in** ‘weight’), and some ‘elemental’ nouns (**wɔ-ótò** ‘moon’, **ù-lénjí** ‘sun’, **ù-pépí** ‘wind’, **ù-láa** ‘fire’). It also contains the word for ‘tree’ **ù-dǎngà**, along with many words for different species of trees and several other objects that are long in shape (e.g. **ù-síin** ‘pestle’, **ù-hóiyú** ‘stream’, **ù-tāan** ‘bow’). There are a few exceptions whose class membership does not appear to have any semantic motivation (**ù-kwáan** ‘skin’, **wú-ntò** ‘guest hut’ and **ù-kómó** ‘salt’).

In addition to the basic place words, the class 7 prefix **u-** may sometimes be prefixed to a noun root to indicate a location, as indicated by the paradigms in (8). This pattern does not appear to be very productive however.

(8) kà-táarí	stone (1)
à-táarí	stones (2)
mà-táarí	pebble (4)
h-táarí	pebbles (5)
t-táarí	bead (8)
ì-táarí	beads (3)
ù-táarí	stony place (7)
k-kíisò	spirit (8)
ò-kíisò	spirits (2)
ù-kíisò	the hereafter (7)

3.2.5 Gender 8/2

(9) Gender 8/2: **C-, Ø-/A-**

k-ká	woman	à-ká	women
z-zá	person	à-zá	people
w-wómó	chief	ò-wómó	chiefs
va-áarì	man	a-áarì	men

Gender 8/2 has the most clearly-defined semantic structure of any of the genders, since all members denote humans or spiritual beings. It is also the default gender for Hausa loanwords which denote humans.

⁴ The word **‘ásù** is also interesting because it does not have a noun prefix. Therefore it does not display its gender overtly, but only through the agreements it triggers. This is very rare in Cicipu, and the only other nouns which could be said to have covert gender are a few semi-regular class 6 nouns (see §4.6).

3.2.6 Gender 8/3

- (10) Gender 8/3: **C-, Ø-/i-**
- | | | | |
|---------------|--------|---------------|---------|
| d-dô | horse | ì-dô | horses |
| s-síró | mane | ì-síró | manes |
| g-gáan | plait | ì-gáan | plaits |
| vɔ-ómò | monkey | yɔ-ómò | monkeys |

A high proportion of the nouns in this gender denote animals or birds (32 out of the 75 non-borrowed words). This is also the default gender for loanwords referring to inanimate objects e.g. **bíndígà** ‘gun’.

3.2.7 Gender 9/2

- (11) Gender 9/2: **ku-/A-**
- | | | | |
|----------------|------|---------------|-------|
| kù-tívì | ear | à-tívì | ears |
| kù-béyí | hoe | è-béyí | hoes |
| kù-cínó | back | ò-cínó | backs |
| kù-tóo | hen | ò-tóo | hens |

Similar to 1/2, there is no obvious semantic unity to this gender.

3.2.8 Single class genders

- (12) Gender 1: **kA-**
- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| kà-ráa | eating |
| kò-rísìnôo | Karishen (town) |
| kà-'àlbàrkà | prosperity (from Hausa) |
| kà-làahíyà | well-being (from Hausa) |

Single class gender 1 has rather an unusual makeup. It consists of the names of certain major Cicipu settlements, some borrowed words, and a few deverbal nominalisations such as **kà-ráa** ‘eating’. Nevertheless the large number of borrowed abstract nouns in this gender means it cannot be considered inoperative, and it is therefore listed here with the main genders.

- (13) Gender 3a: **i-**
- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| ì-cícípú | prayers |
| ì-sípá | song |
| ì-sáyàtú | comb |
| ì-ḡócì | illness |
- (14) Gender 3b: **ri-**
- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| rù-wé'è | valley |
| rù-'ú | body |
| rù-húngwá | resting |
| ru-úsì | rainy season |

(15) Gender 4: **mA-**

mò-hín'ín	blood
mò-yóo	beer
mà-hûun	truth
mò-zóngó	rejoicing

Several gender 4 nouns denote liquids such as **mò-tôon** 'saliva' and **mò-ní** 'water', with a **mA-** prefix which can be traced all the way back to Proto-Niger-Congo (Williamson 1989). While some of these liquid nouns do pluralise (taking class 5 prefixes), the referent changes its nature considerably, as is the case in other languages (c.f. *I like beer* vs. *I want two beers*). I have counted all such liquid nouns in this gender rather than 4/5, regardless of whether a countable plural could be elicited or not.

(16) Gender 5: **N-**

ñ-háalú	journey
ñ-káci	hunting
ñ-lávù	sleepiness
mi-ínsìn	ululation
ñ-sándá	between the legs

This is a small gender with only five members and could be classified as inquorate.

(17) Gender 6: **ci-**

cì-cínà	charcoal
tì-hí'ó	straw
tì-yéyí	dirt
cù-kùyâa	earwax

Gender 6 is divided between non-liquid mass nouns and abstract nouns. The abstracts found in this gender tend to be derived either from verbs, or from more basic nouns:

(18)	cì-'ítàní	marriage	'ita	marry (v.)
	cì-pátí	request	pata	plead (v.)
	tì-wómó	chieftaincy	w-wómó	chief (8/2)
	tù-mócì	friendship	m-mócì	friend (8/2)
	tì-yírì	witchcraft	y-yírì	witch (8/2)
	tí-gàjì	priesthood	má-gàjì	priest (4/5)

In contrast, the abstract nouns in gender 7 do not usually have lexical counterparts in other genders. Often the derived gender 6 noun can be given the gloss 'institution of ____'. This is relatively productive and several words I tried to coin were readily accepted e.g. **tì-bówó** 'thievery' from **b-bówó** 'thief' (8/2).

For ethnic groups there is a consistent paradigm involving classes 1, 2, 6, and 8:

Table 4: Ethnic group paradigm

Class	Acipu	Karishen	Kadonho	Hausa	Gloss
8	c-cípù	Ø-rísìnô	d-dípó	k-kógó	Person
2	à-cípù	ò-rísìnô	ò-dípó	ò-kógó	People
1		kò-rísìnô	kò-dípó		Town/area
6	cì-cípù	tì-rísìnô	tì-dípó	tì-kógó	Language/dialect

Karishen and Kadonho are the Hausa names of two of the Cicipu dialect centres; the same paradigm applies to the other dialects as well.

(19) Gender 7: **u-**

ù-yéyù	cold
ù-kíísó	the hereafter
ù-kwárí	next year
wò-óvóó	fear

Gender 7 contains mostly abstract nouns.

(20) Gender 8: **C-, Ø-**

l-lámá	sound
c-cá'á	harvest
Ø-kúngwá	God
Ø-rúhùn	last year

Most gender 8 nouns are borrowed from Hausa, and the remainder do not seem to have any semantic coherence.

(21) Gender 9: **ku-**

kù-hínvì	breath
kù-yùnyûn	sand
kù-súun	smell
kù-pílù	many

As with the double class gender 9/2, there is no apparent semantic coherence here.

3.2.8 Inquorate genders

The following examples illustrate the genders with less than five members:

(22) Gender 3b/2: **ri-/A-**

rì-hyán'àn	arrow	à-hyán'àn	arrows
rì-pízi	altar	è-pízi	altars
rù-póon	granary	ò-póon	granaries
rì-hyán'àn	arrow	à-hyán'àn	arrows

- (23) Gender 4/2: **mA-/A-**
mò-rìgídó navel **ò-rìgídó** navels
mò-ríngínó spine **ò-ríngínó** spines
- (24) Gender 6/2: **ci-/A-**
cì-kóotò drum **ò-kóotò** drums
- (25) Gender 2: **a-**
à-húlá name/names

3.3 DEVERBAL NOMINALISATION

Deverbal nominals are formed by attaching a noun class prefix to a verb stem. The most common such nominals take the ‘locative’ class 7 prefix **u-** as in (26) and (27). The process is very productive and it seems that any verb can be so modified. Note also the class 7 agreement prefixes in (26), triggered by the nominalisation **ù-dóvó** ‘pounding’.

- (26) **ù-dóvó** **w-í-dà’ùn** **wú-nà** **kù-mócì**
 NC7-pound AG7-NC3-guineacorn AG7-REL NC9-old_woman
kù-yónò **u-ú-yàan**⁵
 AG9-be\RLS-PFV LOC-NC7-do [dóvó = pound]
 the pounding of guineacorn that the old woman is doing

- (27) **ù-yô** **u-ú-hìnò** [hino = dig]
 1S-be\RLS LOC-NC7-dig
 I am digging [lit. I am at digging]

The next most productive nominalisation is formed with the class 9 prefix **ku-**. This prefix can be applied to a large number of verbs, perhaps the majority, and the resulting nominal denotes a repetitive action. The prefix is often accompanied by a change of quality in the final vowel of the verb to [u], as in (28).

- (28) **ò-kóndò** **kù-zé’ùn** [ze’en = dance]
 3P-enter\RLS NC9-dance
 they started dancing

- (29) **à-yáan** **kù-sírìbà** **cì-kóotò** [siriba = play frenziedly]
 3P-do\RLS NC9-play_frenziedly NC6-drum
 they played the drum frenziedly [lit. they did playing frenziedly]

Class 4 deverbal nominalisations seem to denote the state resulting from multiple occurrences of an activity, abstracting away from their instantiation in time. So

⁵ The abbreviations used in interlinearised examples in this paper are: 1 = first-person, 2 = second-person, 3 = third-person, AG = agreement, ANTIC = anticausative, ART = article, COP = copula, HAB = habitual, IMP = imperative, IRR = irrealis, LOC = locative, NC = noun class, NEG = negative, PART = particle, PFV = perfective, POSS = possessive, PRO = pronoun, P = plural, REL = relative, RLS = realis, S = singular.

example (30) could not denote a single instance of kicking, but rather to the taking part in a game of football. To refer to, say, a slow-motion replay of a player kicking a ball, the class 7 prefix **u-** would have to be used instead.

- (30) **ù-yô á=mà-gávà** [gava = kick]
 3S-be\RLS LOC-NC4-kick
 he is playing football [lit. he is kicking]

Despite also requiring there to be multiple occurrences of the activity, class 4 nominalisations are nonetheless distinct from those of class 9. While the latter *highlight* the iterative nature of the event, class 4 nominalisations seem to ‘smooth over’ the individual occurrences, focusing instead on the state of affairs which thereby arises. For example the use of the class 9 prefix in (31) brings into profile God’s daily interventions on behalf of the speaker, whereas the same example with class 4 **ma-** is less specific, and might be translated *God looks after me*. It is remarkable that class 4 prefixes also occur with mass nouns, which have this same property of homogeneity.

- (31) **k-kúngwá Ø-yô kù-cíndà kú-vô** [cinda = wait]
 NC8-God AG8-be\RLS NC9-wait AG9-1S.POSS
 God is looking after me

Deverbal nominals belonging to classes 1, 3a, 3b, and 6 do occur, but they are rarer and it is not clear how they differ semantically from the more common nominalisations discussed above.

3.4 GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The table below is included to give a rough idea of the distribution of Cicipu nouns according to gender. The database of nouns used in this study was not built using a statistical sampling technique, and so some genders may be under- or over-represented with respect to the lexicon as a whole. In particular a high proportion of nouns in gender 7/8 were observed solely during elicitation sessions on tree names. Proper nouns and identifiable loanwords have not been included in the count, even though they make up a significant proportion of some genders (especially single class genders 1 and 8).

Table 5: Distribution of Cicipu genders (singulars down, plurals across)

Class	2 A-	3a i-	5 N-	8 C-	Single
1 kA-	227				8
2 A-					1
3a i-					19
3b ri-	4				7
4 mA-	3		103		17
5 N-					5
6 ci-	1		17		49
7 u-				50	18
8 C-	17	75			11
9 ku-	64				15

4. NOUN PREFIXES

In this section I will discuss the phonological form of the noun prefixes. General properties are dealt with first, followed by class-specific phenomena.

4.1 VOWEL-INITIAL ROOTS

All of the classes contain nouns with vowel-initial roots, which can be distinguished from consonant-initial roots by the nature of the first syllable of the word. In the case of consonant-initial roots, the vowel is short and usually low-tone. With vowel-initial roots, on the other hand, the vowel is long and seemingly always high-tone. This long, high-tone vowel is analysed here as a product of coalescence involving the short prefix vowel and the first root vowel, diagrammed below for **rúusi** ‘war’ (**ri** + **úsi**) using the autosegmental formalism:

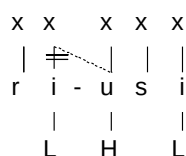


Figure 2: Noun prefix plus vowel-initial root

Vowel-initial roots are found in each of the classes:

(32)	1	káadándá	thorn (kA- + ádándá)
	2	áadándá	thorns (A- + ádándá)
	3a	yóomò	monkeys (i- + ómò)
	3b	rúumá	war (ri- + úmá)
	4	máabà	anger (ma + ábà)
	5	múinsìn	crying (mi- + ínsìn)
	6	céedũ	top of the head (ci- + édũ)
	7	wóovó	fear (u- + óvó)
	8	vóomò	monkey (vi- + ómò)
	9	kwéetú	medicine (ku- + étú)

Because of independently-established phonotactic constraints, I have interpreted the prefixes **i-** (class 3) and **u-** (class 7) as consonants **y** and **w** when they appear before vowel-initial roots. The prefix vowel is entirely subsumed by the root vowel, apart from class 9 where the labialised [**k^w**] retains a trace of the /u/ prefix vowel⁶.

4.2 PREFIX TONE

The tone on the noun class prefix is usually predictable from the structure of the noun root. It can be derived as follows:

- If the noun root is vowel-initial, then the prefix vowel merges with the first root vowel to form a long vowel, as discussed in the previous section. The root vowel quality is dominant, and the tone is high⁷.

(33)	ka-ádándá	thorn (kA- + ádándá)
	kó-óbí	he-goat (kA- + óbí)
	ko-óci	hole (ku- + óci)

- If the noun root contains only low tones then the prefix is high.

(34)	kó-ggòmbò	bat
	mó-kkòdò	rumour-mongering
	ká-dàngì	testicle
	wú-ntò/ví-ntò	guest hut/guest huts

- Otherwise the prefix is low.

(35)	kà-bará	elder
	kò-dóndó	garden
	ù-kúwò	baobab tree

This is slightly different from the situation in Central Kambari, where the prefix

⁶ Effects of this kind are not found with any of the other classes – for example in the class 6 noun **tsoṣi** ‘pepper’ (**ti-** + **ṣi**) the [t] is not palatalised.

⁷ All the cases I have found so far have had high tones word-initially. However there are not many vowel-initial roots, neither are there many beginning with a low-tone. This means the possibility of a long, low-toned prefix cannot be ruled out – even if they exist, a larger sample of nouns might be required for them to appear.

is high if the noun root contains only *high* tones, and low otherwise (Crozier 1984).

Nouns with a L H tone pattern are an exception to the above rules, and these may have either high (36) or low (37) prefixes. There does not seem to be any way to predict which.

- | | | | |
|------|---------|------------------|----------|
| (36) | H - L H | ká-kkàcín | middle |
| | | ká-ɗísí | spot |
| | | kó-kùdó | meeting |
| (37) | L - L H | kò-ɓiyó | pumpkin |
| | | kà-kàanáa | crab |
| | | mà-cìjí | calabash |

4.3 CLASSES 1, 2 AND 4

Nouns from classes 1, 2, and 4 occur with the harmonising prefixes **kA-**, **A-**, and **mA-** respectively. Unlike the northwestern West Kainji languages (e.g. Hoffman 1967 for C'Lela), where prefixes often just consist of a consonant followed by a short transitional schwa, Cicipu prefixes always have phonetically full (but still short) vowels. The quality of the vowel in these classes is determined by the root vowels as follows:

- If the root contains /e/, then the prefix vowel will be [e]
- If the root contains /o/, then the prefix vowel will be [o]
- If the root contains /ɔ/, then the prefix vowel will be [ɔ]
- Otherwise the prefix vowel will be [a]

These rules do not need to be ordered, since the strong vowel harmony operative in the language (§1.3) ensures that the four vowels involved are mutually exclusive. When speakers say a word slowly, they often pronounce the prefix [**ka**] (or [**a**], or [**ma**]), regardless of the root vowels which follow. With that in mind, I have analysed the underlying vowel in these harmonising prefixes as /a/.

While the above rules predict the vowel quality of the prefix in the majority of cases, there is another factor involved when it comes to roots which only have close vowels. Roots with only [i] or [u] sometimes occur with prefixes containing the mid vowels [e] and [o] respectively, rather than the [a] which we would normally expect. This can be viewed as an assimilatory process, with the underlying prefix vowel /a/ raising in the environment of a high-vowel root, but there does not seem to be any way to predict whether or not this process will in fact occur. This is true even at the level of individual roots, as shown by **mè-gísì** and **kà-gísì** in (38-39).

- | | | |
|------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (38) | kè-bíkí | celebration (from Hausa <i>biki</i>) |
| | kè-bimbîi | buzzing insect, k.o. |
| | mè-gísì | walking stick |
| (39) | kà-yíví | cold tuwo |
| | ká-ɗísí | spot |
| | kà-gísì | stick |

- (40) **kò-dûu** heart
kò-lúu knee
kó-cìyû heap
- (41) **kà-gúutù** buttock
kà-núu head of corn
kà-búngú snake

There remain some words whose prefixes cannot be accounted for either by harmonisation or by assimilation. The words in (42) should have the prefixes **ma-/ka-** according to the first set of rules, and **me-/ke-** according to the second. The roots in all such examples so far have contained only /i/ vowels, and the prefix vowel has always been /o/.

- (42) **mò-sín** shame
mò-ní water
mò-hín'in blood
kò-zíní ghost

4.4 CLASSES 3A AND 3B

Class 3a and class 3b nouns both trigger **yi-** agreement prefixes. However they have been divided into two morphological noun classes, according to whether the noun takes an **i-** (3a) or a **ri-** (3b) prefix. There is no difference between the two in terms of agreement, but there is with respect to gender pairings. Class 3a nouns are either members of the single class (3a), or plurals of class 8 nouns (8/3a). Class 3b nouns likewise have their own single class (3b), but they also pair up with class 2 plurals (3b/2). The distribution can be summarised as follows:

Table 6: Distribution of class 3 prefixes according to gender

Prefix	Singular	Plural	Single class
3a (i-)	✗	✓ (8/3a)	✓
3b (ri-)	✓ (3b/2)	✗	✓

Class 3b has an interesting counterpart in Central Kambari. There are (at least) two Central Kambari nouns which take the class 8 concords, but have an unexpected **li-** prefix. One of these nouns ('arrow') has a cognate in Cicipu class 3b. Furthermore, the **li-** nouns pair with class 2 plurals, just like Cicipu class 3b. De Wolf (1971) views these two roots as a remnant of the Proto-Benue-Congo gender ***li-/a-** (corresponding to Proto-Bantu 5/6), which includes words for 'arrow', 'body', and 'war', glosses which can all be found in Cicipu 3b/2 (although the roots themselves are not obviously cognate). Class 3a, on the other hand, is most likely a reflex of Proto-Benue-Congo ***i-** (corresponding to Proto-Bantu 10). Despite their syntactic equivalence, therefore, classes 3a and 3b probably have different ancestor classes.

4.5 CLASS 5 PREFIX

The class 5 prefix has an interesting set of allomorphs, just as in Central Kambari (Hoffman 1963):

- **N⁸-** before short consonants
- **mi-** before long consonants
- **m-** before vowels (with the usual coalescence rules – see §4.1)

There are in fact two ways of forming class 5 nouns from roots with long initial consonants. One method involves the addition of an epenthetic vowel to the prefix to form **mi-**:

(43)	mà-nnú	bird	mì-nnú	birds
	má-llù	master	mí-llù	masters

The other method, which is apparently not found in Central Kambari, is to reduplicate the first syllable of the root before adding the **N-** prefix. We will come back to these two methods in §7.

4.6 CLASS 6 PREFIX

The class 6 prefix takes a variety of forms: **ci-**, **cu-**, **ti-**, or **tu-**. Variation between **i** and **u** is in fact a general problem of Cicipu phonology, just as it is in Hausa (Newman 2000: 399-400), although in this case it is largely predictable. On the other hand, while the **c/t** alternation shows some interesting patterns, in the majority of cases the prefix consonant must be lexically-specified. In this discussion nouns that belong to the paired genders 6/5 and 6/2 will be treated separately to those belonging to the single class gender 6, since they turn out to have different behaviour. In the sample of class 6 nouns there are 19 paired nouns and 49 single class nouns.

Starting with the paired nouns, 17 of the 19 begin with **[c]**, and only two (**tì-zàarúmà** ‘flea’ and **tì-jímà** ‘male warthog’) with **[t]**. This can be treated as an idiosyncratic property of these roots, to be handled in the lexicon. The prefix vowel of the paired nouns is more complex. Three of these sixteen prefixes have an **[u]** vowel, and in each case the root V1⁹ is also **[u]**.

(44)	cù-kúndú	hyena
	cù-kûun	waist
	cù-kúlú	tortoise

The other thirteen prefixes have **[i]**. An obvious hypothesis is that the prefix vowel is underlyingly **/i/**, but assimilates to **[u]** when V1 is **[u]**. However there are four further words where the root contains only **[u]**:

(45)	cì-yú	porcupine
	cì-yú’ú	hoe for making ridges
	cí-llú	neck
	cì-lúu	leopard

The **[i]** in the first two of these words can, not unreasonably, be put down to the effect of the palatal C1 **[j]**. The third case is more difficult to account for, but for now we could hypothesise that long consonants block the assimilation of the prefix to **[u]**. The fourth I have no explanation for¹⁰.

⁸ **N-** represents a nasal homorganic with the following consonant.

⁹ V1 = first vowel of the root, V2 = second vowel of the root, C1 = first consonant of the root, and so on.

¹⁰ It was mentioned above that the **i/u** alternation is a general problem of Cicipu phonology. In fact

Turning to the 49 members of the single class, things become more complicated. Five are irregular, or possibly vowel-initial roots¹¹. These are listed below, but will not concern us further here.

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|--|
| (46) | t̪in | faeces |
| | t̪aa | food |
| | s̪ingí | hair |
| | s̪up̪oon | falsehood |
| | s̪umbó | drink made from red sorrel sepals (Hausa zobo) |

Of the remaining 44 nouns, 23 begin with [t̪] and 21 with [c]. There is no discernible phonological pattern to the distribution, as demonstrated by the following examples of contrast in analagous environment:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------|------------------|
| (47) | c̪ù-k̪ùyáa | earwax |
| | t̪ù-k̪úwò | baobab-leaf soup |
| | c̪ì-ḡáyà | discipline |
| | t̪ì-bárá | elderhood (male) |
| | c̪ì-'ítàní | marriage |
| | t̪ì-'ízà | dew |

[t̪] and [c] also contrast before both [i] and [u] in roots – for example **k̪à-c̪ín** ‘upper grinding stone’ vs. **k̪à-t̪in** ‘head’. At the moment the reason for the prefix variation is unknown, and if it were not for the phonetic similarity between the two phones¹², I would have no reservations about setting up morphological subclasses 6a and 6b, just as has been done for 3a and 3b.

The single class prefix vowels are determined in the same way as for the paired nouns and are unproblematic. Five of the prefixes have [u], while the remainder have [i]. In three of the five cases, V1 is [u]:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------|------------------|
| (48) | c̪ù-k̪ùyáa | earwax |
| | t̪ù-k̪úwò | baobab-leaf soup |
| | c̪ù-'únwáan | groaning |

In one further case, although V1 is not [u], C1 is a labialised consonant. In the

there are reasons to think that the alternation is probabilistic – in other words, there are discernible trends which can be explained using phonological theory, but they are not deterministic. This applies both across the lexicon, and also at the level of individual words and their instantiations in different usage events.

¹¹ Without a corresponding plural, it is not always clear whether roots are vowel-initial or not. For example we could analyse **t̪aa** as **t̪i** + **á**, in which case it would no longer be irregular. Instead it is simply the result of the normal rules for noun prefixes before vowel-initial roots. The same holds for **t̪in**. This would be a more appealing analysis if there were candidates for vowel-initial monosyllabic roots in other noun classes as well.

¹² Certain words even show ‘free’ variation between the two phones, such as **ciyo/tiyo** ‘get’, although this is not the case generally. Concerning the related language Central Kambari, David Crozier (p.c.) has remarked that the NC6 prefix consonant may be either [c] or [ts]. This time, however, the alternation is principled, with [c] occurring before roots with a front V1, and [ts] otherwise. Interestingly this alternation does not apply more generally in the language, only to the NC6 prefix, and /c/ and /ts/ are found in contrast just as /c/ and /t/ are in Cicipu.

same way as the palatal approximant /y/ was held to condition an [i] prefix vowel, so /h^w/ can be held to condition a [u] prefix vowel:

- (49) **tù-hwí'í** C'Lela language

The other example with an /u/ prefix is an exception to the above account: **tù-móci** 'friendship'.

Finally, there is one case of an [i] prefix vowel co-occurring with a [u] V1, **tì-ttúmò** 'granary cover'. Like **cí-llú** before, however, C1 is long, and it seems that a long C1 really does block assimilation to [u].

4.7 CLASS 8 PREFIXES

The class 8 prefix has an interesting set of variants, the distribution of which is as follows:

- If the root is consonant-initial, then C1 may simply be lengthened¹³, for example:

(50)	z-zá	person	à-zá	persons	8/2
	d-dô	horse	ì-dô	horse	8/3
	c-có'ò	sheep (sg.)	ì-có'ò	sheep (pl.)	8/3
	k-ká	woman	à-ká	women	8/2

- In other cases, C1 does not lengthen and so there is no prefix:

(51)	Ø-cicérè	star	ì-cicérè	stars	8/3
	Ø-móotòò	car	ì-móotòò	cars	8/3
	Ø-híi'òò	ant, k.o.	ì-híi'òò	ants, k.o.	8/3

- If the root is vowel-initial, then **vi-** is added. As with all vowel-initial roots, the prefix vowel coalesces with V1 giving a long, high-tone vowel with the same quality as V1:

(52)	vi- + ómò → vóòmò	monkey	8/3
	i- + ómò → yóòmò	monkeys	

The same rules apply for the class 8 plurals of nouns in gender 7/8 such as **ù-lénjí** 'day'/l-lénjí 'days'.

The distinction between the lengthening prefix and no prefix at all is not always clear-cut. Certain nouns always seem to start with a long consonant (e.g. **k-ká** 'woman'), but others are more variable, even within the speech of an individual. The lengthening option for class 8 consonants seems to be a stereotype of 'good Cicipu'.

There are however two constructions in which the consonant is almost always lengthened, even for words such as those in (51) which otherwise have a null prefix. These are the associative (genitive) construction, illustrated in (53), and the locative pro-clitic **A-** (54).

¹³ I have not found a long C1 in any class 8 roots.

- (53) NC_x-possessed AG_x=NC_y-possessor

kà-dámá kó = m-mòtò

NC1-word AG1=NC8-car

the word 'car'

kà-búngú kó = d-dô

NC1-snake AG1=NC8-horse

snake of horse [i.e. horse-snake, a species of snake]

- (54) **ù-yô é = k-kèkè**

3S-be\RLS LOC=NC8-bicycle

he was on a bike

ù-yô á = g-gwàndà

3S-be\RLS LOC=NC8-pawpaw

he was in a pawpaw tree

Note how the vowel quality of both the agreement morpheme and the locative are determined by the nouns to which they are attached. Given that vowel harmony does not normally operate across word boundaries, this is evidence for treating them as part of the second phonological word in these examples¹⁴. It seems then that the distinction between the **C**- and **Ø**- sets of class 8 nouns illustrated in (50) and (51) becomes blurred in a (phonological) word-medial environment.

For Central Kambari Hoffman (1963) set up two subclasses, 8a for nouns with the **C**-/vi- prefix, and 8b for those that have no prefix. Given that this alternation is not always predictable in Cicipu, as well as being neutralised word-medially, I have decided not to split the class in this description.

5. AGREEMENT TARGETS

There is a very large number of agreement targets within the Cicipu noun phrase, and verbal and adjectival predicates also agree in gender with the subject. This agreement takes the form of prefixes or pro-clitics attached to the target, all of which are similar or identical in form to the noun prefixes which were listed in Table 3.

On the whole we find a one-to-one correspondence between noun prefixes and agreement prefixes. In some cases there are under-differentiating targets (i.e. targets with fewer than expected distinctions) due to the phonological similarity between classes 4 and 5. Overall, however, the agreement system is uniform, with only one set of agreement markers shared by all targets. One general complication is that the tones of the various targets' prefixes vary. In addition the agreement prefix vowel for class 6 may be either **ti**- or **tu**-, as was the case for the class 6 noun prefix. For the special case of the class 8 agreement prefix, see §6. In the subsequent discussion on specific targets, it should be assumed that the prefixes follow the basic pattern set out in Table 7 unless otherwise stated.

¹⁴ There is further evidence that these morphemes are clitics; in particular, they can attach to a variety of hosts.

Table 7: Agreement prefixes found before consonant-initial and vowel-initial roots

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
_C	kA-	hA-	yi-	mA-	mi-/N-	ti-/tu-	wu-	vi-/C-/Ø-	ku-
_V	k-	h-	y-	m-	m-	t-	w-	v-	kw-

The different agreement targets in Cicipu are listed in Table 8, and then discussed more fully in the rest of this section.

Table 8: Agreement targets

Target	Prefix tone
Numerals	L
Associative construction	H
Possessive pronouns	H
Demonstrative modifiers	H
Demonstrative adverbs	L
Presentative	H L
Article/relativiser	H
Pronouns	H or L
Copula	None (C-)
Negative copula	L
‘Another’	None (C-)
‘Which’	None (C-)
‘Alone’	L
Subject marker	L
Adjectives	L

5.1 NUMERALS

Numeral phrases are formed by the singular noun followed by a numeral with a low-tone agreement prefix. The agreement marker occurs up to but not after the number nine, and the prefix forms are wholly regular. The following example shows each numeral with class 1 agreement:

- (55)
- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | kà-bára kò-tòò | one elder |
| 2 | kà-bára kà-yápù | two elders |
| 3 | kà-bára kà-tàatù | three elders |
| 4 | kà-bára kò-nósi | four elders |
| 5 | kà-bára kà-táu | five elders |
| 6 | kà-bára kà-tórhìn | six elders |
| 7 | kà-bára kà-tíndàyà | seven elders |
| 8 | kà-bára kà-kùrìllò | eight elders |
| 9 | kà-bára kà-kùtítí | nine elders |
| 10 | kà-bára kúppá | ten elders |

In the following table the numeral is kept constant (**yápù** ‘two’) and the class of the head noun is varied:

(56) Class

1	kà-bára kà-yápù	two elders
2	à-zá hà-yápù	two people (plural form of noun)
3	ì-námà yì-yápù	two meats
4	mà-díyá mà-yápù	two hares
5	h̄-yó'yó mì-yápù	two fish (plural form of noun)
6	cì-kótò tì-yápù	two drums
7	ù-yáa wù-yápù	two roads
8	c-có'ò vì-yápù	two sheep
9	kù-lácì kù-yápù	two girls

Classes 2 and 5 do not occur with singular nouns and so are not normally involved in numeral phrases. Some speakers, however, optionally use the plural form of the noun in numeral phrases, as in the examples above.

When counting, the prefix may be omitted. Alternatively, if the speaker has a particular object or class of objects in mind, he may choose to use the appropriate agreement prefix. For example when counting days (**kwa-án'àn**, NC9), the class 9 prefix **ku-** may be used. For numbers from 11-19, 21-29, 31-39 and so on, it is obligatory to use an agreement prefix on the 'units' figure, as in (57):

- (57) **kúppá** **h̄** **kù-tò**
 ten and AG9-one
 eleven [days]

In some cases there is no obvious referent and therefore no agreement controller, for example when giving a demonstration of the counting system for the linguist. In this case the class 8 prefix **vi-** is used with the units figure from 11 onwards. This is a case of 'neutral' agreement, a topic we return to in §9.

5.2 ASSOCIATIVE CONSTRUCTION

The associative construction takes the form NP₁ ag_{NP1-NP2}, where NP₁ is the possessed noun and NP₂ is the possessor noun. NP₁ occurs in its citation tone pattern, the agreement prefix ag_{NP1} is high tone, while NP₂ undergoes a complex tonal perturbation. The most salient feature of this perturbation for the present discussion is that the pitch of the NP₂ root vowels is consistently lower than that of the agreement prefix vowel, so that for monosyllabic roots, say, the tone pattern on the second phonological word is H L, as in (58).

- (58) 1 **kà-dámá** **ká-k-kà** the word of the woman
 2 **à-dámá** **há-k-kà** the words of the woman
 3 **ì-námà** **yí-k-kà** the meat of the woman
 4 **mà-díyá** **má-k-kà** the hare of the woman
 5 **h̄-díyá** **mí-k-kà** the hares of the woman
 6 **cì-kótò** **tí-k-kà** the drum of the woman
 7 **ù-yáa** **wú-k-kà** the road of the woman
 8 **c-có'ò** **ví-k-kà** the sheep of the woman
 9 **kù-dávù** **kú-k-kà** the mortar of the woman

5.3 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

There are six possessive pronouns, which are phonologically similar to the other person prefixes and pronouns. The pronouns take regular agreement prefixes and occur after the possessed noun.

- (59) **kà-bára** **kó-vô** **k-ká** **va-ávù**
 NC1-elder AG1-1S.POSS NC8-woman AG8-2S.POSS
 my elder your (s.) wife

The full paradigm is shown in Table 9:

Table 9: Possessive pronoun paradigm with gender agreement prefixes

	1S	2S	3S	1P	2P	3P
1	ko-vô	ka-ávù	ke-évì	kó-ttù	kó-ddô	ki-ívè
2	ho-vô	ha-ávù	he-évì	hó-ttù	hó-ddô	hi-ívè
3	yi-vô	ya-ávù	ye-évì	yí-ttù	yí-ddô	yi-ívè
4	mo-vô	ma-ávù	me-évì	mó-ttù	mó-ddô	mi-ívè
5	mí-vô or ñ-vô	ma-ávù	me-évì	mí-ttù	mí-ddô	mi-ívè
6	ti-vô	ta-ávù	te-évì	tí-ttù	tí-ddô	ti-ívè
7	wu-vô	wa-ávù	we-évì	wú-ttù	wú-ddô	wi-ívè
8	vi-vô or v-vô	va-ávù	ve-évì	ví-ttù	ví-ddô	vi-ívè
9	ku-vô	kwa-ávù	kwe-évì	kú-ttù	kú-ddô	kwi-ívè

The 2S, 3S, and 3P forms all have long vowels together with the C- series of prefixes, which suggests the pronouns are vowel-initial (c.f. §4.1). As with the combination of noun prefixes and nouns, these long vowels are interpreted as the product of coalescence between the prefix vowel and the first root vowel. Again, the root vowel is dominant and the prefix vowel is lost.

The CV- prefixes in class 1, 2, and 4 all have the prefix vowel [o], which is best thought of as the realisation of an underspecified V- in the usual way, its quality being determined by vowel harmony:

- (60) **kà-bára** **kó-vô** **à-bára** **hó-ttù** **mè-ttégù** **mó-ddô**
 NC1-elder AG1-1S.POSS NC2-elder AG2-1P.POSS NC4-shirt AG4-2P.POSS
 my elder our elders your (pl.) shirt

The other class prefixes retain their usual vowels:

- (61) **cì-kóotò** **tì-vô** **c-cs'ò** **ví-ttù** **kù-láci** **kú-ddô**
 NC6-drum AG6-1S.POSS NC8-sheep AG8-1P.POSS NC9-girl AG9-2P.POSS
 my drum our sheep (s.) your (pl.) girl

Finally, the tone on the 1S agreement prefix is unspecified, assimilating to the tone immediately to the left. So in examples (60) and (61) we have high-tone **kó-** after **kà-bára**, but low-tone **tì-** after **cì-kóotò**. The underlying possessive pronouns are therefore analysed as follows:

Table 10: Underlying possessive pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	-vô	ʼttù
2	-ávù	ʼddô
3	-évi	-ívè

To account for the high tone on the inserted 1P and 2P prefix /o/ vowels I have posited a floating high tone that docks to the left of the pronoun. The 1S prefix vowel, on the other hand, is unassociated with any tones and so the last tone of the previous word spreads to the right. As a general point, it can be observed that the H L tone pattern on the possessive pronoun matches that of the associative construction examples given in §5.2. Thus we might consider the possessive pronouns to be a special case of the associative – further evidence for this analysis will be presented in §9.

5.4 DEMONSTRATIVE MODIFIERS

There are five deictic distinctions in Cicipu. The demonstrative modifiers encoding these distinctions occur after the noun and take a high-tone CV- agreement prefix:

- (62) **ka-áyá ká-mpà** this hut (near to speaker)
ka-áyá ké-llè that hut (near to hearer)
ka-áyá ké-ʼʼindè yonder hut (far from both)
kò-dóndó kó-ʼʼûn that garden (very far away *or* out of vision)
kwa-áʼà kú-ddô this house (permanent place)

The meaning of the final term **-ddô** is difficult to state precisely. It involves an interesting combination of SOCIAL and PLACE deixis. Its range of meaning overlaps with that of the near deictic **-mpà**, but there are times when only **-ddô** is appropriate. For example if two Acipu are discussing their village at home they could use either **-mpà** or **-ddô** to refer to it. If they travelled to a nearby Kambari town, then not surprisingly **-mpà** ‘this’ can no longer be used to refer to their home village. However they can continue to use **-ddô** in this way, regardless of their geographical location. For inhabitants of different villages, the range of locations that can be referred to using this deictic is different, and so the precise meaning of **-ddô** in any given usage event can only be determined by deictic anchorage.

The agreement paradigm is fully regular but is presented below for completeness. The fact that long consonants occur root-initially in four of the five modifiers is striking and an explanation of this is offered in §9.

Table 11: Demonstrative modifiers with gender agreement prefixes

	this	that	yonder	out of sight	this (perm.)
1	ká-mpà	ké-llè	ke-ʼʼindè	kó-ʼʼûn	kó-ddô
2	há-mpà	hé-llè	hé-ʼʼindè	hó-ʼʼûn	hó-ddô
3	yí-mpà	yí-llè	yí-ʼʼindè	yí-ʼʼûn	yí-ddô
4	má-mpà	mé-llè	mé-ʼʼindè	mó-ʼʼûn	mó-ddô
5	mí-mpà	mí-llè	mí-ʼʼindè	mí-ʼʼûn	mí-ddô
6	tí-mpà	tí-llè	tí-ʼʼindè	tí-ʼʼûn	tí-ddô

7	wú-mpà	wú-llè	wú-''indè	wú-''ûn	wú-dđò
8	ví-mpà	ví-llè	ví-''indè	ví-''ûn	ví-dđò
9	kú-mpà	kú-llè	kú-''indè	kú-''ûn	kú-dđò

5.5 DEMONSTRATIVE PREDICATES

There are five demonstrative adverbs corresponding to the five demonstrative modifiers discussed above:

- (63) **pâa** here (near speaker)
lêe there (near hearer)
'indè yonder (far from both)
'ûn very far away *or* out of sight
dđò here, our permanent place

These demonstratives agree in gender with the subject NP when used as predicates. In response to the question **han X?** 'where is the X?', one possible answer is **X AG_x-pâa** 'the X is here'. The prefixes on the demonstratives are regular and low-tone, just as in the case of verbal and adjectival predicates (§5.14 and §5.15).

- (64) **kà-táarí** **kà-pâa**
 NC1-stone AG1-here
 the stone is here

- (65) 1 **kà-táarí** **kà-pâa** the stone is here
 2 **à-táarí** **hà-pâa** the stones are here
 3 **ì-námà** **yì-pâa** the meat is here
 4 **mà-ciijí** **mà-pâa** the stone is here
 5 **h-gáin** **mì-pâa** the swords are here
 6 **cì-kó'ûn** **tì-pâa** the chest is here [i.e. body part]
 7 **ù-ré** **wù-pâa** the town is here
 8 **Ø-vóotò** **vì-pâa** the goat is here
 9 **kù-sáyú** **kù-pâa** the spear is here

Each of the five demonstrative adverbs follows the same pattern. These are shown below for class 3, but the pattern is regular across all the classes. The data was again elicited in response to the question '**han X?**'.

- (66) **ì-táatù** **yì-pâa** the mat is here (near speaker)
ì-táatù **yì-lêe** the mat is there (near hearer)
ì-táatù **yì-'indè** the mat is over there
ì-táatù **yì-'ûn** the mat is there (far away *or* out of sight)
ì-táatù **yì-dđò** the mat is here (permanent place)

5.6 PRESENTATIVE

Yet another way of answering the question **han X?** involves two new agreement targets and an absent controller:

- (67) **k-í** **k-è** **pâa**
 AG1-PRO AG1-COP here
 it [the stone] is here

- (68) 1 **k-í k-è pâa** it (stone) is here
 2 **h-í h-è pâa** they (stones) are here
 3 **y-í y-è pâa** it (mat) is here
 4 **m-í m-è pâa** it (calabash) is here
 5 **m-í m-è pâa** they (calabashes) are here
 6 **t-í t-è pâa** it (food) is here
 7 **w-í w-è pâa** it (work) is here
 8 **v-í v-è pâa** it (sheep) is here
 9 **kw-í kw-è pâa** it (mortar) is here

The exact meaning of the targets here is problematic, since I have not found either of them in any other context. Both are similar to the copula/noun class pronoun (§5.8 and §5.10), but differ by retaining the same vowel throughout the paradigm.

5.7 ARTICLE/RELATIVISER

The article **-nà** can occur either before or after the noun head. After the noun head indicates anaphoric reference to an NP, while before the head marks an indefinite but specific NP. In both cases it takes a high-tone regular agreement prefix.

- (69) 1 **kà-bará ká-nà** the elder
 2 **ó-ggòmbò há-nà** the bat
 3 **ì-námà yá-nà** the meat
 4 **mà-díyá má-nà** the hare
 5 **h-díyá mí-nà** the hares
 6 **cì-kóotò tí-nà** the drum
 7 **ù-yáa wú-nà** the road
 8 **c-có'ò ví-nà** the sheep
 8 **v-áarì n-nà** the man
 9 **kù-lácí kú-nà** the girl

The class 5 prefix may be either **mi-** or **N-** which can lead to classes 5 and 8 being undifferentiated:

- (70) **h-díyá** **n-nà** **w-wómó** **n-nà**
 NC5-hare AG5-ART NC8-chief AG8-ART
 the hares the chief

Relative clauses are marked by (i) the perfective aspect marker **-na** on the verb, and (ii) the occurrence of a morpheme identical in form to the article following the noun. This article-like morpheme is obligatory in relative clauses, regardless of the information status of the NP referent, and this is why it is referred to here as a 'relativiser' rather than treated as a special case of the article.

- (71) **ì-rí yí-nà g-gúyà-nà ù-yíndà**
 NC3-thing AG3-ART 2S-can\RLS-PFV NC7-see
 the things that you can see

The class 8 agreement prefix may be either the usual **vi-**, or the lengthening prefix familiar from the discussion of noun prefixes in §4.7. The distribution of these two allomorphs in relative clauses is not random and will be discussed in §6.

5.8 COPULA

The copula consists of either an [e] or an [i] vowel, with a gender agreement prefix of the C- form. The [e] vowel is found in classes 1, 2, and 4, the prefixes of which usually have the harmonising /A/ vowel. It may therefore be analysed as the product of assimilation between the prefix vowel /A/ and an underlying /i/ in the copula (see also §4.3). The tone on the copula is usually polar with respect to the previous syllable, but there are a lot of exceptions and this area is not well understood yet.

- (72) **ì-cíntò y-í mà-gáin m-è kò-rúdú k-è**
 NC3-doorway AG3-COP NC4-sword AG4-COP NC1-shelter AG1-COP
 it's a doorway it's a sword it's a shelter
- (73)
- | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | kó-ggòmbò k-é | it's a bat |
| 2 | ó-ggòmbò h-é | it's bats |
| 3 | ì-námà y-í | it's meat |
| 4 | mà-díyá m-è | it's a hare |
| 5 | h-díyá m-ì | it's hares |
| 6 | cì-kóotò t-í | it's a drum |
| 7 | ù-yáa w-ì | it's a road |
| 8 | c-csó'd v-í | it's a sheep |
| 9 | kù-láci kw-ì | it's a girl |

5.9 NEGATIVE COPULA

The negative copula consists of the negation particle **cé** (also found in negated verbal clauses) with a regular low-tone agreement prefix.

- (74) **ù-kómó wù-cé w-wómó c-cé kù-kómmó kù-cé**
 NC7-salt AG7-NEG NC8-chief AG8-NEG NC9-dump AG9-NEG
 it's not salt it's not the chief it's not the dump

5.10 NOUN CLASS PRONOUNS

Noun class pronouns take the same form as the copula (see §5.8), but the tone depends on the syntactic position of the pronoun rather than its phonological environment. In the complement position following verbs or the locative proclitic **Á-** they occur with low tone as in (75); in most other environments they take a high tone as in (76).

- ### 5.11 ‘ANOTHER’

(78)	1	kà-bará kó-mbòn	another elder
	2	à-bará hó-mbòn	other elders
	3	ì-námà yí-mbòn	another meat
	4	mà-díyá mós-mbòn	another hare
	5	h-díyá mí-mbòn	other hares
	6	cì-kóotò tí-mbòn	another drum
	7	ù-yáa wú-mbòn	another road
	8	c-cs'ò ví-mbòn	another sheep
	9	kù-láci kú-mbòn	another girl

The morpheme **-èné** ‘which’ takes regular agreement prefixes of the form C-

- (79) **k-èné ká-bára k-è ka-áyà-nà?**
AG1-which NC1-elder AG1-COP AG1-come\RLS-PFV
which elder came?
- (80) 1 **k-èné kábára** which elder
2 **h-èné óggòmbò** which bat
3 **y-èné ínámà** which meat
4 **m-èné mádíyá** which hare
5 **m-èné ndíyá** which hares
6 **t-èné cíkóotò** which drum
7 **w-èné úyáa** which road
8 **v-èné ccó’ò** which sheep
9 **kw-èné kúláci** which girl

5.13 'ONLY'

The word **nínńńí** 'only' is another gender agreement target, taking an optional low-tone CV- prefix. I do not have a full paradigm for this target yet but there is no reason to think it will not be as regular as the other targets.

- (81) **kù-yùnyûn kù-nínńńí**
 NC9-sand AG9-alone
 just sand

5.14 SUBJECT AGREEMENT

Verbs are obligatorily prefixed by either a person or gender marker. The gender agreement prefixes conform to the regular pattern and are low-tone and of CV- shape, unless the verb is vowel-initial in which case they have the C- forms, with the usual prefix/root vowel coalescence (§4.1).

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| (82) | mà-díyá | mà-dúkwa | v-áarì | va-áyà |
| | NC4-hare | AG4-go\RLS | NC8-man | AG8-come\RLS |
| | the hare | went | the man | came |

Just as in Central Kambari (Crozier 1984: 215-222), there is an alternation between 3rd person and gender subject agreement for both human and non-human referents. It is not a simple task to predict which type of agreement will occur, since syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic factors are all involved. A number of strong tendencies have been observed, although none of them are absolute. For example, if there is no explicit subject NP, or if the subject NP is a personal pronoun, then person agreement is the usual case. However gender agreement is also possible, as shown by the second example in (83) where the class 4 agreement controller **mò-ní** 'water' is absent from the sentence, but the verb still takes a class 4 agreement prefix.

- | | | | |
|------|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| (83) | (éví) ù-dúkwa | but | mà-sídù-wà |
| | 3S.PRO 3S-go\RLS | | AG4-heat\RLS-ANTIC |
| | he went | | it [the water] is heated up |

Similarly human referents usually (but not always) trigger person rather than gender agreement, and the same is true for topical referents. These factors are not conceptually independent, since topics, human referents, and 'pro-drop' are all associated cross-linguistically. It is hoped that further controlled investigation of this alternation will make the individual contributions of these factors clearer.

5.15 ADJECTIVES

Adjectival modifiers take a low tone prefix. For class 5 the **N-** variant seems to be preferred to **mi-**.

- | | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| (84) | 1 | kòzúvù kè-pénâu | big finger [i.e. thumb] |
| | 2 | óggòmbò hè-pénâu | big bats |
| | 3 | ínámà yì-pénâu | big meat |
| | 4 | màdíyá mè-pénâu | big hare |
| | 5 | ndíyá m-pénâu | big hares |
| | 6 | cikóotò tì-pénâu | big drum |

7	ùyáa wù-pénâu	big road
8	ccɔ'ò vî-pénâu	big sheep
9	kùláci kù-pénâu	big girl

6. CLASS 8 AGREEMENT PREFIXES

Having discussed the set of class 8 noun prefix allomorphs in §4.7, we now turn to the corresponding set of agreement prefixes, the distribution of which is perhaps even more complex. Recall that the class 8 noun prefix has three allomorphs: either **Ø-** or **C-** before a consonant-initial root, and **v-** before a vowel-initial root. The same three forms are found for the agreement prefix, but there is also an additional variant **vi-**, which is found before all long consonants, and sometimes before short ones. The main problem here is to describe the conditions under which each of the consonant-initial variants surface.

First of all, it should be admitted that it is frequently hard to decide whether a particular instance of a prefix is **Ø-** or **C-**. Textual analysis is complicated by the fact that in fast speech, the contrast between long and short consonants is often unclear. Nevertheless speakers have a metalinguistic awareness of these two possibilities, just as for the noun prefix, and this means it is possible to have fruitful elicitation sessions on the topic. As with the class 8 noun prefixes, the doubling option (**C-**) is again considered to be the 'best' style of Cicipu.

Apart from stylistic factors, the choice of prefix is also influenced by the kind of agreement target, and by the semantics of the noun triggering the agreement. For most targets all three possibilities **vi-**, **Ø-** and **C-** can occur, as shown below for numerals (85) and the associative construction (86):

- (85a) **mu-úwà 'o' n-nósi**
 1S-hear\RLS 'o' AG8-four
 I heard four 'o's

- (85b) **mu-úwà 'o' Ø-nósi**
 1S-hear\RLS 'o' AG8-four
 I heard four 'o's

- (85c) **mu-úwà 'o' vî-nósi**
 1S-hear\RLS 'o' AG8-four
 I heard four 'o's

- (86a) **z-zá k-kú-yimà**
 NC8-person AG8-NC9-smith
 blacksmith [lit. person of smithing]

- (86b) **z-zá Ø-kádìsà**
 NC8-person AG8-Kadisa
 person of Kadisa [a village]

- (86c) **w-wómó ví-mò-nì**
 NC8-chief AG8-NC4-water
 chief of the water

Agreement on numerals is in fact optional, so it is not clear whether (85b) shows a null prefix or a lack of agreement altogether. However there is no doubt about the associative construction; since agreement is obligatory for every other noun class, there is no reason to analyse it as optional for class 8, especially given the independent existence of the **C-/Ø-** noun prefix alternation.

The article/relativiser **-nà** on the other hand, allows only **C-** (87a) or **vi-** (87b), and is never found with a null prefix (87c):

- (87a) **'b' n-nà Ø-líbà-nà kù-gíyà**
 'b' AG8- AG8-lack\RLS-PFV NC9-hook
 REL
 'b' without a hook

- (87b) **'b' ví-nà Ø-líbà-nà kù-gíyà**
 'b' AG8- AG8-lack\RLS-PFV NC9-hook
 REL
 'b' without a hook

- (87c) ***'b' Ø-nà Ø-líbà-nà kù-gíyà**
 'b' AG8- AG8-lack\RLS-PFV NC9-hook
 REL

The distribution of **n-nà** and **vi-nà** in textual examples is not random, and they are in more or less complementary distribution. **N-nà** almost always occurs immediately after lexical heads (80 tokens, one exception), while **vi-nà** mostly (12 tokens, one exception) occurs as a headless relative, as in (88). This situation has a parallel in Hausa, where headless relatives require the longer relativiser **wanda**, and headed relative clauses are more likely to have the short form **da** (Newman 2000: 534-536).

- (88) **ví-nà Ø-sí-zìndò vɔ-ómò sée ú-cìyò-nò**
 AG8-REL AG8-HAB-change NC8-monkey then 3S-collect\IRR-PFV
 the [woman] one who changed into a monkey collected

As well as the target type, the animacy of the noun triggering the agreement is also a factor in determining the form of the prefix. There is a weak association between nouns denoting humans and **C-** or **Ø-**, and between animals and inanimates and **vi-**. This has been investigated more fully for numerals, but the correlation is believed to hold for other target types which allow a choice as well. Nouns for which consonant-doubling is preferred tend to have human referents: **z-zá** 'person', **k-ká** 'woman', **va-ári** 'man', **m-máci** 'friend'. Nouns for which the **vi-** agreement prefix is preferred are mostly animals or inanimates, such as **c-cs'ò** 'sheep', **vɔ-ómò** 'monkey', and **Ø-rikódà** 'audio recorder'.

Noun class 8 agreement is a complex topic and given the variation found even for individual nouns, as with the noun class prefixes it does not seem appropriate to set up separate agreement subclasses 8a and 8b to deal with the separate prefixes.

7. REDUPLICATED PLURALS AND EPENTHESIS

A number of Cicipu words form their plurals by duplicating the first consonant of the root together with the normal method of changing the prefix. These words have so far only been found in genders 1/2 and 4/5, and their roots always begin with a long consonant. This is significant because long consonants are relatively rare in Cicipu. Some examples are given in the following table:

Table 12: Reduplicated plurals with root-initial long consonants

Singular	Plural	Gloss	Gender
kò-ddó	ò-dí-ddó	edge	1/2
kà-dǎyí	à-dí-dǎyí	tear [i.e. a rip]	1/2
kà-hhúuncí	à-hún-hhúuncí	cloud	1/2
ká-kkàcín	á-ká-kkàcín	middle	1/2
kà-llávù	à-lì-llávù	dream	1/2
mò-ccókó	ò-cí-ccókó	bag, small	4/5
mò-ggódó	ò-gú-ggódó	bump	4/5
mò-kkó'ò	ò-kú-kkó'ò	ladle	4/5
mò-ppón	ò-pí-ppón	granary, small	4/5
mè-ttégù	ò-tí-ttégù	shirt	4/5

The noun prefix is low tone, and an epenthetic short (usually high-tone) [i] or [u] is inserted between the first (short) consonant and the original (long) consonant. For 1/2 nouns with initial long consonants the reduplication is optional, and there does not seem to be any semantic difference between the two forms. Nouns from gender 4/5, on the other hand, only have the reduplicated possibility in the plural.

The majority of 4/5 nouns form their plurals by reduplication, while just a few use the prefix **mi-**: recall from §4.5 that this is an allomorph of the noun class 5 prefix **N-** applying to roots beginning with a long consonant. These two processes of reduplication and epenthesis can be seen as means to the same end – the avoidance of consonant clusters with three timing units¹⁵. The effect of reduplication is to split the **N-** prefix from the long consonant and place it to the left of the shortened reduplicant instead, resulting in a consonant cluster of only two timing units. Epenthesis in class 5 plurals avoids the consonant cluster altogether, so that we have, for example, **mì-llú** ‘necks’ instead of ***ñ-llú**.

There is an interesting parallel to the **N-/mi-/m-** alternation from outside the noun class system. The conjunction **Ñ-** ‘and/with’ has variants **ni-** and **n-**, and the three allomorphs are distributed in just the same way as the class 5 prefixes¹⁶: **ni-** occurs before long consonants (89), **n-** before vowels (90), and **Ñ-** everywhere else (91).

¹⁵ For a similar phenomenon in an unrelated language c.f. Hume et al. (1997: 375), who write that in the Austronesian language Leti “metathesis applies before a word-initial geminate...as a means of avoiding a complex syllable margin”.

¹⁶ Cicipu does not generally allow syllables with codas, and so it has not been possible to find any further parallel situations that might give rise to a consonant cluster.

person rather gender agreement (see §5.14).

Certain patterns involving conjoined NPs and gender agreement are nevertheless judged as acceptable. The following two examples show agreement with the first conjunct, again avoiding the issue of gender resolution.

- (95) **mà-gáin** **h** **kù-sáyù** **mò-yúwò-nò**
 NC4-sword and NC9-spear AG4-fell\RLS-PFV
 the sword and the spear fell

- (96) **ì-bèyé** **h** **tò-ósi** **yì-yúwò-nò**
 NC3-rice and NC6-pepper AG3-fell\RLS-PFV
 the rice and the pepper fell

There is however one kind of syntactic resolution that is acceptable for at least some speakers. In examples (97) and (98) the verb agrees with the plural class corresponding to the class of the first conjunct. So in (97) there is class 5 agreement since this is the plural class for **mà-gáin** (4/5) ‘sword’, similarly in (98) the first conjunct **kà-táarí** (1/2) ‘stone’ triggers class 2 agreement. I was explicitly told by my consultant that the **mi-** and **ho-** agreement prefixes occurred because more than one item was involved.

- (97) **mà-gáin** **h** **kù-sáyù** **mì-yúwò-nò**
 NC4-sword and NC9-spear AG5-fell\RLS-PFV
 the sword and the spear fell

- (98) **kà-táarí** **h** **mà-kántú** **hó-yúwò-nò**
 NC1-stone and NC4-knife AG2-fell\RLS-PFV
 the stone and the knife fell

According to Corbett (2006: 170), the agreement with the more distant conjunct seen in (95) and (96) is rare cross-linguistically, and it is worth asking whether these examples really do show two conjoined NPs, rather than one NP with an adnominal comitative phrase. One possibility is that the agreement with the distant conjunct is in fact triggered by a comitative construction (*i.e. the sword* [with the spear]), whereas the syntactic resolution seen in (97) and (98) involves true conjoined NPs¹⁷. If Cicipu does have an adnominal comitative construction, there may well be semantic and syntactic tests to distinguish it from conjoined NPs (Haspelmath 2004). This is a matter for further investigation.

9. NEUTRAL AGREEMENT

In Cicipu neutral agreement (agreement with atypical controllers – see Corbett 1991) usually involves class 8, regardless of the type of target. This is not really surprising given that this class has a null prefix, amongst other allomorphs. Consequently controllers can function as a noun in this class without any structural change, and yet not appear ‘out of place’ either.

The controller in (99) is atypical in that it is not a word at all, and therefore

¹⁷ Haspelmath (2004: 18) notes that “Conjunctive constructions often contrast with comitative constructions in requiring nonsingular agreement on the verb”.

cannot have an inherent gender. Here ‘o’ triggers class 8 agreement on the numeral. As usual with class 8 agreement, **vi-** or **Ø-** may be substituted for the lengthening prefix.

- (99) **mu-úwà ‘o’ n-nósi**
 1S-hear\RLS ‘o’ AG8-four
 I heard four o’s [i.e. the sound ‘o’]

The next example shows the letter ‘b’ triggering class 8 agreement on the relativiser **-nà**.

- (100) **‘b’ n-nà Ø-líbà-nà kù-gíyà**
 ‘b’ AG8- AG8-lack\RLS-PFV NC9-hook
 REL
 ‘b’ without a hook [i.e. not b]

The next example demonstrates neutral subject agreement:

- (101) **‘a’ vi-ítà mù**
 ‘a’ AG8- 1S.PRO
 satisfy\RLS
 an ‘ah’ satisfied me [i.e. that was the sound I wanted to hear]

Likewise new coinages also trigger class 8 agreement, as in example (102) from a Cipu schoolboy involving the modifier **-mbòn** ‘another’ and the English word *history*.

- (102) **tí-’èsènú kà-dáa á-history nà, tí-’èsènú ví-mbòn**
 1P-add\IRR NC1-word AG2-history PART 1P-add\IRR AG8-another
 let’s add a word about history, let’s add another [history]

Example (103) comes from a metalinguistic discussion involving the word **haaya** ‘they came’.

- (103) **òkóo “haaya” vì-yápù**
 there_is “haaya” AG8-two
 there are two “haaya”s

One further case of neutral gender involves the possessive pronouns discussed in §5.3. This time it is gender assignment which is at issue rather than agreement. The forms of three of the six possessive pronouns (1P, 2P, and 3S) are exactly what one would expect if they were considered as straightforward associative constructions (§5.2), with the usual personal pronoun as the possessor. Example (104) has been reanalysed from (61) accordingly:

- (61) **c-c’ò ví-ttù kù-lácí kú-d’ò**
 NC8-sheep AG8-1P.POSS NC9-girl AG9-2P.POSS
 our sheep (s.) your (pl.) girl

(104)	c-cʼò	ví-t-tù	kù-láci	kú-d-dò
	NC8-sheep	AG8-NC8-1P.PRO	NC9-girl	AG9-NC8-2P.PRO
	our sheep (s.)		your (pl.) girl	
	[lit. sheep of us]		[lit. girl of you]	

The similarity between the tone patterns here and those found in standard associative construction has already been observed (§5.3), but thinking of the possessive pronouns in this way can also explain the long consonants in the 1P and 2P forms. Here they can be viewed as class 8 prefixes attached to the non-nominals **tù** and **dò**, just as they are in example (61) for regular nouns. The same analysis can also be applied to the demonstrative modifiers (§5.4), which also have a H L tone pattern and lengthened consonants.

10. LOANWORDS

Loanwords can be found in most genders, although they cluster in genders 8, 8/3, and 1/2. It is not easy to give accurate figures, even for the limited sample of nouns under consideration in this paper, mainly due to the difficulty of distinguishing between borrowing and code-switching. Virtually all Cicipu speakers are fluent in Hausa, and speakers of all ages frequently use words derived from Hausa. In trying to separate borrowings from code-switchings there are diagnostics which can be applied, but unfortunately they often point in conflicting directions. Nevertheless the figures given here do give an overall idea of the distribution.

Table 13: Proportion of loanwords in genders

Gender	Prefix	Total	Loans	Percentage of gender borrowed
1/2	ka/a	282	56	20
4/5	ma/mi	115	12	10
8/3a	vi/i	118	43	36
9/2	ku/a	64	0	0
7/8	u/vi	51	1	2
8/2	vi/a	21	4	19
6/5	ti/mi	17	0	0
1	ka	15	7	47
3a	i	20	1	5
3b	ri	7	0	0
4	ma	21	3	14
5	mi	5	0	0
6	ti	55	6	11
7	u	18	0	0
8	vi	44	33	75
9	ku	15	0	0
2	a	1	0	0
3b/2	i/a	4	0	0
4/2	ma/a	2	0	0
6/2	ti/a	1	0	0

Leaving aside gender 1 and 1/2 for the moment, genders 8, 8/2 and 8/3a are the most over-subscribed. As was noted in the discussion on neutral agreement (§9), it is probably not a coincidence that the noun prefix for class 8 is either null or a **C**-allomorph. Whiteley (1967) (cited in Corbett 1991) observed that in Kiswahili the most popular reception classes for borrowings are those with null prefixes. Hausa words can ‘fit in’ to class 8 without looking out of place. Some examples are:

- (105) **róobà** (8) rubber (from Hausa *roba*)
z-zéni (8) cloth (*zane*)
kàràatúu (8) reading (*karatu*)

káatáakó (8/3) plank (*katako*)
mìsáali (8/3) example (*misali*)
d-dágá (8/3) belt (*daga*)

Hausa words may also be assigned to other Cicipu noun classes if they start with a syllable resembling a noun class prefix, as shown in (106). The three examples referring to towns illustrate that the assignment is purely formal and not semantic.

- (106) **mà-kárántáa** (4/5) school (from Hausa *makaranta*)
mà-llû (4/5) master (*mallami*)
mà-’ánáa (4/5) meaning (*ma’ana*)
mà-búdí (4/5) key (*mabudí*)
ta-ábà (6) tobacco (*taba*)
wɔ-ótò (7) moon (*wata*)

Màkúukù mé (4) it’s Makuku town
Kónòò ké (1) it’s Kano town
Dirindaji vi (8) it’s Dirindaji town

It seems that in Cicipu borrowed words are not assigned gender on the basis of their meaning. This contrasts with the situation found in *ut-Ma’in* from the northwest branch of West Kainji, where loanwords are frequently assigned gender because of their semantic properties (Smith 2007: 37-66). One reason for this difference may be that the null-prefix class in *ut-Ma’in* is restricted to humans, and is therefore unavailable as a general destination for formal assignment.

There remains a large number of loanwords in genders 1 and 1/2, the presence of which cannot be explained by either formal or semantic assignment rules (recall that this gender has no coherent semantic structure).

- (107) **kà-làahíyà** (1) peace (*lafiya*)
kà-’àlbàrkà (1) prosperity (*albarka*)
kà-hákùrì (1) patience (*hakuri*)
ká-húusì (1) anger (*haushe*)

kà-ḡáuná (1/2) buffalo (*ḡauna*)
kò-wàndó (1/2) pair of trousers (*wando*)
kà-káasùwà (1/2) market (*kasuwa*)
kà-húskà (1/2) face (*fuska*)

There are at least two ways to account for this. First of all, it may be that as the largest gender in Cicipu, 1/2 (and by extension 1) functions as a ‘default’, if the formal assignment rules evident in (105) and (106), for whatever reason, fail to come into effect. The idea of a default gender has been criticised by Corbett (1991: 77-80), since researchers may propose one even when native assignment rules already account for the data. According to Corbett’s (1991) analysis of Bantu noun class systems (and by extension, other typologically similar Benue-Congo systems), they are primarily morphological in nature. In other words, a noun triggers gender 1/2 agreement because the noun itself has a class 1 prefix in the singular, and a class 2 prefix in the plural. This allows him to classify these systems as having ‘morphological’ assignment, along with languages such as Russian where the gender of a noun is partly determined by its declension pattern. However it does not answer the question as to how Benue-Congo nouns come to be classified as they are. The problem is still there, only removed to the morphology. So while under Corbett’s analysis there is no need for a ‘default gender’ in Cicipu, there may well be a default noun class pairing 1/2 for loanwords, which in turn means they belong to the 1/2 gender.

An alternative and perhaps preferable explanation is that the existence of borrowed words in 1/2 is due to a general gravitation of nouns towards that gender. This trend was observed for Central Kambari by De Wolf (1971), and the same pattern is found in Cicipu. It may be that these loanwords started their lives in gender 8/3 as we would expect, but over time they have shifted to gender 1/2 along with other Cicipu words. The nouns **kò-ccòkò** ‘bag’ (from *jaka*), **kà-ttílú** ‘pot’ (*tulu*) and **kò-ttúdu** ‘ridge’ (*tudu*) may be evidence of this shift – they all have root-initial long consonants which suggests an earlier stage of their existence in 8/3¹⁸.

If the loanwords in 1/2 have moved there from 8/3, then we would expect to find more established items in 1/2 and newer borrowings in 8/3. On the whole, this is what we find. Words for modern objects such as **móotòò** ‘car’, **róobà** ‘rubber’, and **kácâa** ‘bicycle chain’ all belong to 8/3, while words denoting universal or more traditional concepts are more often found in 1/2.

11. CONCLUSION

Cicipu has a robust noun class system with ten morphological classes, or nine syntactic classes. There are seven major double class genders and eight single class genders, and the agreement morphology is very uniform across a wide range of target types. Most genders have a certain amount of semantic coherence, although only one is fully regular.

There are several promising areas for further research. The conditions governing the person/gender subject agreement alternation are not yet fully understood, neither is it clear exactly what determines the distribution of the various class 8 agreement prefix allomorphs. The **C-** lengthening allomorph is particularly unusual, and a comparative study with the other Kambari cluster languages might be able to explain the double development of this variant and the root-initial long consonants found in these languages. If the coordinate structures discussed in §8 are in fact true conjoined NPs rather than instances of an adnominal comitative construction, then Cicipu has

¹⁸ It seems likely be that all the root-initial long consonants in Kambari and Cicipu came about in this way, and that roots with long consonants originated in class 8/3. In support of this there do not appear to be any root-initial consonants in class 8. Also the root-initial long consonants and the special class 8 lengthening prefix are peculiar to the Kambari/Cicipu branch of West Kainji, and so it makes sense for them to be related historically.

typologically-unusual agreement with distant conjuncts. Finally, the epenthesis shown by the class 5 noun and agreement prefixes may have relevance for the representation of syllable-initial long consonants, a topic of current interest in phonology.

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