

## Naki noun class system sketch

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### Background

This description highlights the regular system; irregular plurals are not particularly rare, though the class memberships are still generally regular.

Class numberings are meant to correspond to Proto-Bantu, though proper reconstruction has not been done in this regard. Class 3/6 appears to collapse 3/4 and 5/6.

Tone should be reasonably accurate in surface terms. Some levels may be mistranscribed since a four-level distinction was only recently unambiguously uncovered, but places where a formal distinction is purely tonal should accurately reflect which class has a lower/higher tone than the other.

Orthographic conventions attempt to follow the “General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages”.

Coda obstruents are written using the voiced series b,d,g but the phonetic realization can be devoiced in all positions and fricated in alveolar and velar positions.

### Example nouns

Class 1/2:	ɲkũŋ/bũŋkũŋ	‘chief’
Class 3/6:	gí/góŋ	‘egg’ (regular vowel alternation triggered by coda “ŋ” in plural)
Class 7/8:	ànyēnā/bìnyēnā	‘bird’ (prefix does not look like class 7, but some concords do)
Class 9/10:	shè/shé	‘fowl’
Class 14:	ũnā	‘fufu’ (not clearly distinct from class 6 formally—see below)
Class 6a:	ŋú	‘water’
Class 19/18:	fíbúd/mbúd	‘cat’ (some variation in attitudes towards tone on prefix ‘m’)

## Pronoun system

Preverbal (“subject”) forms are written without tones since TMA marking interacts with their form, making it difficult to determine the underlying pattern. The vowel often elides with a following TMA-marking vowel.

### Preverbal personal pronouns

	Sg	Pl
1st	mi	ki
2nd	wə	be
3rd	lu	bu

### Non-preverbal personal pronouns

	Sg	Pl
1st	mī	sì
2nd	wè	bè
3rd	lù	bú

Note: Uniquely for the area, 1p preverbal is clearly distinct from 1p non-preverbal.

There is also an antilogophoric pronoun for 3s with form “we”.

No compound pronouns (like in Noni) were found during elicitation.

### Class pronouns

- |           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1. (= 3s) | 2. (= 3p)                |
| 3. wí     | 6. nú                    |
| 7. kí     | 8. bí (preverbally: byə) |
| 9. yì     | 10. yí                   |
| 14. (= 3) |                          |
| 6a. mú    |                          |
| 19. fí    | 18. (= 6a)               |

Class pronouns can show different tones in preverbal position but, except for class 8, show same segments. See above for remarks on the difficulty of determining the tone of preverbal pronouns.

## Possessive forms

### Class 1

wãm	wã
wǎg	wě
wĩ	wìbū

Note: In elicitation, the rise is sometimes realized as a plain low.

### Class 2

bâm	bâ
bôg	bê
bî	bíbū

### Class 3

wãm	wã
wǎg	wě
wĩ	wìbù

### Class 6

nãm	nã
nǎg	ně
nĩ	nūbù/nìbù

### Class 7

kãm	kã
kǎg	kě
kĩ	kìbù

Class 8

byām	byā
byōg	byē
bī	bībū

Class 9

yām	yā
yōg	yē
yī	yībū

Class 10

yām	yā
yōg	yē
yī	yībū

Class 6a

mām	mā
mōg	mē
mī	mībū

Class 14 (= 6)

Class 19

fyām	fyā
fyōg	fyē
fi	fibū

Note: Some details of this paradigm need to be re-checked.

Class 18 (= 6a)

## Demonstratives

### the/that

- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| 1. wè | 2. b́  |
| 3. ẃ | 6. ń  |
| 7. ḱ | 8. bý |
| 9. yè | 10. yé |

14. (= 3)

6a. ḿ

19. fyé      18. (= 6a)

Note: Speakers translate ‘that’ in elicitation contexts with these elements. However, in texts they have a distribution closer to an article, and they also translate these elements as ‘the’. There is another element which seems only to mean ‘that’ (see below).

### this

- |             |               |   |
|-------------|---------------|---|
| 1. wèn/wènī | 2. bèn/bènī   |   |
| 3. wên/wênì | 6. nèn/nènì   | (Note: Younger speaker not raised in village had “nènì”.) |
| 7. kèn/kèní | 8. byèn/byèní |   |
| 9. yèn/yènì | 10. yên/yênì  |   |

14. (= 3)

6a. mèn/mènì

19. fyèn/fyènì      18. (= 6a)

Note: In elicitation speakers report no difference in meaning between the two forms. The tone on the final vowel was not always consistent in the two syllable forms, and I transcribe the one that seemed most dominant in more careful (whistled) elicitation. However, I would not read too much into the alternations of that tone at this point.

that

- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| 1. wè | 2. bó  |
| 3. wé | 6. nó  |
| 7. ké | 8. byé |
| 9. yè | 10. yé |

14. (=3)

6a. mó

- |         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| 19. fyé | 18. (=6a) |
|---------|-----------|

Note: The formal similarity between clas 1 and the antilogophoric pronoun may be of interest.

Associatives

- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| 1. wī | 2. bū  |
| 3. wī | 6. nū  |
| 7. kī | 8. bī  |
| 9. yī | 10. yī |

14. (=3)

6a. mū

- |        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| 19. fī | 18. (=6a) |
|--------|-----------|

Note: There seem to be no tonal distinctions on associatives.

Numbers ‘one’ and ‘two’

- |       | ‘one’   | ‘two’ |  |
|-------|---------|-------|--|
| 1/2   | mù      | būfǎ  |  |
| 3/6   | mù      | fǎ    |  |
| 7/8   | āmù     | bīfǎ  | Note: ‘one’ behaves like a noun, not an adjective in showing ‘a-’ not ‘ki-’. |
| 9/10  | mì      | fyǎ   | Note: I’d like to double-check the vowel on ‘one’                            |
| 14    | (wì?)mù |       | Not: One conservative speaker in one session gave a prefix.                  |
| 19/18 | fímù    | mfǎ   |  |

“Quantifiers”: ‘other’, ‘which’, and ‘all’

‘other’

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. jò     | 2. bùdò    |
| 3. jō     | 6. dō      |
| 7. àdò    | 8. bìdò    |
| 9. jò     | 10. jō     |
| 14. (= 3) |            |
| 6a. mdō   |            |
| 19. fidō  | 18. (= 6a) |

‘which’

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. ɲgì    | 2. bùɲgì   |
| 3. ɲgì    | 6. ɲgì     |
| 7. āɲgì   | 8. bīɲgì   |
| 9. ɲgì    | 10. ɲgì    |
| 14. (= 3) |            |
| 6a. mɲgì  |            |
| 19. fīɲgì | 18. (= 6a) |

‘all’

- |            |
|------------|
| 2. bûnsèn  |
| 6. nûnsèn  |
| 8. bînsèn  |
| 10. yînsèn |
| 6a. mûnsèn |
| 18. (= 6a) |

(Note: I need to doublecheck this paradigm.)