

The locus of parametric variation in Bantu gender and nominal derivation

Abstract

In this paper, we capture the crosslinguistic variation in Bantu nominal structure in a unified analysis of gender on *n* (Kramer 2014, 2015). We demonstrate that this analysis accounts for the morphosyntactic properties of basic nouns as well as locative and diminutive derivations. Moreover, it allows us to capture intra- and inter-language morphosyntactic variation by reference to just three parameters – one strictly morphological and two structural. The presence of one or two *n* heads, and the size of the complement distinguish between different types of locatives (structural variation); the presence or absence of a spell-out rule of adjacent *n* heads differentiates “stacking” versus “non-stacking” prefixes in diminutive and augmentative derivations (morphological variation only).

Key words: grammatical gender, Bantu languages, comparative syntax, nominal derivation, locatives, diminutives

1. Introduction

Bantu languages boast a nominal system that is replete with the kind of microvariation that constitutes a particularly promising field of study for comparative syntacticians. In any Bantu language, every noun belongs to a noun class, commonly thought to combine number and gender information (Carstens 1991). These features are realized on nouns as class prefixes, and they index agreement both within the nominal phrase (i.e. concord) and in the clause in the form of subject or object markers on the verb, as illustrated in (1). As explained below, these noun classes can be paired as gender A, B, C etc.

(1) Swahili¹

Gender A, singular

M-toto hu-yu a-na-som-a.
1-child DEM-1 1SM-PRS-read-FV
'This child is reading.'

Gender A, plural

Wa-toto ha-wa wa-na-som-a.
2-children DEM-2 2SM-PRS-read-FV
'These children are reading.'

Gender D, singular

Ki-tabu hi-ki ki-na-som-w-a.
7-book DEM-7 7SM-PRS-read-PASS-FV
'This book is being read.'

¹ Where a reference is not given, the data come from the authors.

Gender D, plural

Vi-tabu hi-vi vi-na-som-w-a.

8-books DEM-8 8SM-PRS-read-PASS-FV

'These books are being read.'

The average number of noun classes in any Bantu language ranges from 12 to 21 (Nurse & Philippson 2003: 8), as most Bantu languages have maintained some subset of the noun classes that are reconstructed for proto-Bantu. The noun classes are traditionally labeled according to a number ascribed to its correlate in proto-Bantu (Meinhof 1906). Table 1 provides an illustration of the noun classes in Lugwere. The first vowel preceding the nominal prefix is the so-called augment, which will become relevant in section 3.1.

| <i>noun class</i> | <i>example</i> | <i>gloss</i> | <i>n.c.</i> | <i>example</i> | <i>gloss</i> |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|-------------|--|------------------------|
| 1 | o- mu -kali | woman | 2 | a- ba -kali | women |
| 3 | o- mu -saale | tree | 4 | e- mi -saale | trees |
| 5 | e- ri -iso | eye | 6 | a- ma -iso | eyes |
| 7 | e- ci -enyaanza | fish | 8 | e- bi -enyaanza | fish (pl) |
| 9 | e- n -tebe | chair | 10 | e- n -tebe | chairs |
| 11 | o- lu -gumba | bone | | | |
| 12 | a- ka -tale a- ka -guumba | market small bone | 13 | o- bu -tale o- bu -guumba | markets small bones |
| 15 | o- ku -tumula | to talk | | | |
| 16 | a- wa -nsi | underside | | | |
| 17 | o- ku -ka-tale | at the market | | | |
| 18 | o- mu -n-yumba | in the house | | | |
| 20 | o- gu -enyaanza | big fish | 22 | a- ga -enyaanza | big fish (pl) |

Table 1 - Noun classes in Lugwere

As illustrated in Table 1, noun classes in Bantu languages occur with basic nouns,² but may also have derivational power, contributing new meaning to the noun to which they affix (see Myers 1987, Ferrari 2005, among others). Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of derived nouns formed using dedicated noun class prefixes: infinitives (class 15), locatives (classes 16-17-18), and diminutives and augmentatives (in Lugwere classes 12/13 and 20/22, respectively).

In the rest of this introduction, we first briefly introduce the derivational properties of locatives and diminutives and demonstrate that they are indeed part of the nominal system, in order to frame the challenges this system presents (more detailed discussions of each type of derived nominal will follow in subsequent sections). We then discuss the approach to these challenges that this paper adopts, presenting them in the broader context of theoretical approaches to nominal structure in Bantu languages and highlighting the paper's contributions to this line of investigation.

² We use the term 'basic noun' to refer to the root plus the first *n* merged to it, and 'basic prefix' to refer to (the spell-out of) that first *n*, i.e. the prefix that a noun occurs in the absence of any further derivation.

Chindamba (Edelsten and Lijongwa 2010: 36-38)

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| (5) a. li-piki | b. ma-piki | c. ka-piki | d. tu-piki |
| 5-tree | 6-tree | 12-tree | 13-tree |
| 'tree' | 'trees' | 'small tree' | 'small trees' |
-
- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (6) a. mu-twe | b. li-twe |
| 3-head | 5-head |
| 'head' | 'large head' |

Again, in many ways, diminutives and augmentatives behave like basic nouns, including the fact that they determine concord and agreement, as illustrated in (7).

Kĩĩtharaka (database Kanampiu & Van der Wal)

- (7) Arî, ka-rá ka-iy-iré i ka-íyí.
no 12-DEM.DIST 12SM.REL-steal-PFV COP 12-small.boy
'No, the one who stole is a small boy.'

Like locatives then, diminutives and augmentatives are treated as part of the nominal system and fall within the empirical scope of a morphosyntactic analysis of Bantu nominal structure.

Crosslinguistic variation in the derivation of diminutives and augmentatives is found in whether the derivational prefix can co-occur with the basic prefix. In examples (5)-(7) above, the diminutive and augmentative prefixes appear *instead of* the basic prefix, seemingly replacing it. However, some languages do not replace the base prefix with the derivational prefix but have the diminutive or augmentative *in addition to* the basic prefix (henceforth “stacking” prefixes), as in the Shona diminutives in (8) and the Nsenga augmentatives in (9):

Shona (Déchaine et al. 2014: 35)

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (8) a. mu-kómáná | b. va-kómáná |
| 1-boy | 2-boy |
| 'boy' | 'boys' |
-
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| c. ka-mu-kómáná | d. tu-va-kómáná |
| 12-1-boy | 13-2-boy |
| 'tiny boy' | 'tiny boys' |

Nsenga (Simango 2012: 178)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| (9) a. mu-nda | b. mi-nda |
| 3-garden | 4-garden |
| 'garden' | 'gardens' |
-
- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| c. chi-mu-nda | d. vi-mi-nda |
| 7-3-garden | 8-4-gardens |
| 'big garden' | 'big gardens' |

While diminutives and augmentatives show variation in stacking versus non-stacking of prefixes, derived locatives consistently require stacking of prefixes across Bantu languages, as in (2) above.

1.2. (Questions for) analyses

This brief introduction paints a relatively complex landscape: a nominal system in which both simple and derived nouns occur with noun class prefixes, and in which the process of nominal derivation may vary between stacking and non-stacking noun class prefixes, both across languages and within a single language. There thus are a number of challenges these systems pose for analysis:

1. How can we account for the basic as well as derivational morphological properties of noun classes in Bantu languages (Bresnan & Mchombo 1995; Carstens 1991, 1993, 1997; Caha & Pantcheva 2015; Déchaine et al. 2014; Mletshe 2017; Mugane 1997; Myers 1987)?
2. How can we account for syntactic properties that do not always co-vary with the morphology (Caha & Pantcheva 2015; Carstens 1993, 1997, 2008; Taraldsen et al. 2018)?
3. How can we account for the crosslinguistic variation, especially in the derivations (Caha & Pantcheva 2015; Carstens 1997, 2008; Ferrari-Bridgers 2008; Kihm 2005)?

The current paper aims to address all three challenges, taking into account more crosslinguistic variation than considered previously and applying a unified framework that has recently been further developed (Kramer 2014, 2015, 2017). We propose that the nominal affix system in Bantu languages can be represented as a set of nominalizers *n* that are distinguished by their grammatical gender features – each associated with a particular noun class pattern (Carstens 1991; see Section 2 for further discussion). Much of the work we build on (see below) proposes that the diminutive/augmentative and locative affixes are either dedicated projections or null heads that merge with the nominal syntactic structure to derive the semantic and syntactic properties of diminutives and locatives. Instead, we centralize the derivational power in a set of elements of the same category. The proposal that basic prefixes, diminutive prefixes, locative prefixes, and the locative suffix are all of the same category allows us to generalize across the morphosyntactic interactions that we see and attribute them to a finite set of morphological and structural parameters concerning the adjacency of *ns*. Note that the parameters proposed in this paper are primarily to be understood as a way to pinpoint variation irrespective of the model of grammar, but can be adapted to theoretical proposals in a recent ‘rethinking’ of comparative syntax as emerging featural parameters (see Roberts 2019 and references therein).

Furthermore, a comparison of these structures under such an analysis of gender reveals that the wealth of morphosyntactic variation in the nominal system can be explained by just three major parameters mentioned above – two of them syntactic and one morphological. Crucially, capturing this microvariation so straightforwardly and simply is made possible by the fact that the same structure underlies all the different types of nominal affixes (locative, diminutive, and basic affixes).

Previous analyses of nominal structure in Bantu languages typically take a subset of the nominal system as their empirical domain or are restricted to one particular language or subgroup of languages. In order to place our contribution within the existing literature, we briefly mention here the focus of the main previous approaches that we are building on, as they will be pertinent to later exposition of the data and analysis.

Déchine et al. (2014) provide an in-depth analysis of basic and derived nouns (particularly diminutives) in Shona as well as certain mass/count distinctions. They identify two fixed positions in the syntactic structure where nominal prefixes (which they analyze as syntactic heads) can merge, and the interpretation of a given prefix as derivational or not is a function of which position the prefix occurs in. In spirit, this analysis is similar to what is proposed here, in that it considers basic prefixes and derivational prefixes to be the same syntactic element in structurally different positions. While the authors offer their proposal as applicable across Bantu languages, they do not discuss crosslinguistic variation (focusing on Shona) or how their proposal might extend to locative nouns.

Taraldsen et al. (2018) take data from Zulu as their starting point, and their analysis departs from that of Déchine et al. (2014) in a number of ways. Their approach places greater emphasis on syntactic rather than morphological data, considering for instance how agreement is computed with conjoined nominal phrases, as agreement does not always follow expected mathematical logic. For instance, conjoined nouns each of class X might be expected to determine agreement in the corresponding plural class Y, but it is well known that languages can feature a default (different) class for conjoined NP agreement. Taraldsen et al. therefore analyze nominal prefixes – both basic prefixes and derived prefixes – to be associated with silent nouns that merge into the structure as specifiers, yielding a bi-nominal representation of nouns in Zulu, which the authors propose to extend to all Bantu languages.

Their analysis is reminiscent of Carstens (1997, 2008), who maintains that non-derived nouns constitute a single nominal phrase but offers a bi-nominal analysis of locatives in languages such as Chichewa (building on Bresnan & Mchombo 1995). While her analysis accounts for a lot of the crosslinguistic variation, we show that it does not quite make the right predictions for locatives (see Section 3), and we note that the zero nouns in both Carstens' and Taraldsen et al.'s analysis may not be learnable (Section 3).

Finally, van der Spuy (2010, 2014) offers an alternative account couched within Distributed Morphology. Like Taraldsen et al. (2018), van der Spuy takes as his empirical domain data from Zulu, but unlike Taraldsen et al. he extends this domain to include locative nouns. However, locatives in Zulu diverge from the dominant pattern described above, in that the locative prefix in Zulu cannot determine agreement with the locative on verbs or on nominal modifiers (van der Spuy 2014, Doke 1973 – see Marten 2010 for an analysis of locatives as prepositions in languages like Zulu). Accordingly, van der Spuy (2014) analyzes the locative in Zulu as a case on the noun. Further, van der Spuy's analysis does not readily account for stacking of prefixes as it occurs in languages such as Shona, as Déchine et al. (2014) point out.

In short, we have a decent starting point, but find a challenge in finding a unified theoretical approach while broadening our empirical basis. We suggest that the framework with the most power to capture the rich variation at different levels of the morphology and syntax that forms the core of our empirical domain is Distributed Morphology (Marantz 1997, 2001; Arad 2003, 2005; Embick and Noyer 2007; Embick and Marantz 2008). Central to the

proposal presented here is the notion that noun classes are an instantiation of grammatical gender, which under the Distributed Morphology framework is located on the categorizing head n , which has derivational properties. Working within this framework allows us to formally encode the fact that some crosslinguistic variation in noun class morphology is just morphological, but other points of variation have structural origins and consequences.

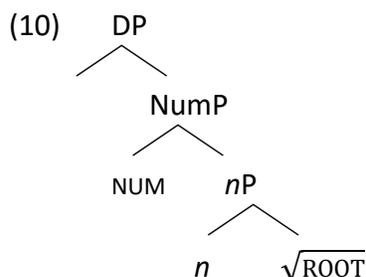
Our proposal builds on previous work by taking into account a broader range of crosslinguistic data than the earlier approaches discussed above, still under a unified morphosyntactic analysis of simple and derived nominals. Whereas previous analyses typically consider non-derived nouns and only one type of derived noun, it is our belief that it is desirable for an analysis of nominal structure in Bantu languages to be able to account for all types of derived nominals – locatives as well as diminutives/augmentatives. We offer analyses of each of these in turn (Section 3 and Section 4, respectively) and also discuss the derivation of deverbal nouns (Section 2). We follow Déchaine et al. (2014) in analyzing class prefixes as heads rather than specifiers, but our approach is structural rather than templatic, with the interpretation of a prefix as basic or derivational arising from its relative position with respect to other features in the structure. The data we consider are predominantly morphological, and we restrict our empirical domain to not include data from conjoined noun phrases, counter to Taraldsen et al. (2018). The resolution of gender agreement as it proceeds in conjoined noun phrases is a matter of syntactic computation (involving gender features, closely linked to the gender assignment rules in a language – Corbett 2006, Wechsler 2009) and is therefore outside the scope of an analysis of the locus of these features based on the morphology of the noun phrase, which is what we aim to account for in this paper.

The scope of this work also departs from previous analyses in that we do not provide a detailed analysis of nominal structure in any single Bantu language but rather a comparative overview of data from several languages that are representative of certain morphosyntactic patterns. We aim to show that by taking a step back from some of the idiosyncrasies of each language and by taking seriously the notion that n is the locus of the gender feature, we can identify cross-Bantu patterns and correlations in nominal phrases and be better equipped to not only explain the observed variation but also make explicit which points of variation are only at the level of the spell-out and which are encoded in the syntax.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the DM approach to Bantu nominal structure and deverbal derivation, laying the theoretical foundation. Section 3 discusses microvariation within the category of locative DPs and applies the analysis to these structures, introducing the two syntactic parameters at the root of Bantu nominal microvariation. Section 4 follows the same steps for diminutive and augmentative derivations and introduces the final parameter, which is morphological in nature. Section 5 addresses the consequences of the proposed parameters, considering what any combination of parameter settings predicts for locatives and diminutives within a single language, and showing how the systematic structural difference between locatives and diminutives makes two further correct predictions. Section 6 synthesizes the findings and concludes.

2. A DM approach to Bantu nominal structure

In the framework of Distributed Morphology, nouns are formed when a category-less root merges with a categorizing *n* head. The resulting syntactic element merges with other functional heads such as Number to build up the spine of the nominal phrase, as schematized in (10).



Number is one of a few agreement features that nominals can carry that determine properties of agreement on nominal modifiers (in languages with concord) and on verbs and predicative adjectives. Grammatical gender is another of these features. We follow much of the literature in taking grammatical gender to be a categorizing feature that groups nouns according to the shape of agreement markers they determine on agreeing elements (Hockett 1958, Corbett 1991, Kramer 2015).

Bantu also has grammatical gender, although its gender system has many more categories than the languages in which grammatical gender is typically investigated. A close examination of Table 1 reveals pairings between noun classes that Carstens (1991) captures by proposing that Bantu noun classes in fact combine gender information with number information. To illustrate, *o-mu-ntu* ‘person, class 1’ and *a-ba-ntu* ‘people, class 2’ share the same gender, but differ in whether their number feature is singular or plural, respectively. Carstens proposes the following system of genders for Bantu languages:

- (11)
- Gender A: stems of class 1/2
 - Gender B: stems of class 3/4
 - Gender C: stems of class 5/6
 - Gender D: stems of class 7/8
 - Gender E: stems of class 9/10

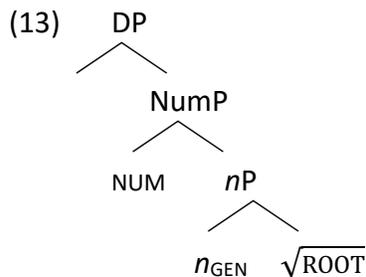
In line with the understanding of gender as a categorizing feature that can be observed through distributional evidence and/or syntactic/morphological behavior, gender in Bantu languages determines not only the shape of the nominal prefix, but also concord morphology on modifiers and verbal agreement,⁴ as illustrated in (1) above for Swahili, partly repeated below:

⁴ See Güldemann & Fiedler 2019 for a comparison across Niger-Congo of gender, agreement class, nominal form class, and derivation/inflection.

Swahili

- (12) *Gender A, singular*
M-toto hu-yu a-na-som-a.
 1-child DEM-1 1SM-PRS-read-FV
 ‘This child is reading.’
- Gender A, plural*
Wa-toto ha-wa wa-na-som-a.
 2-children DEM-2 2SM-PRS-read-FV
 ‘These children are reading.’

While the number feature heads its own projection, various theoretical and empirical considerations led Kramer (2014, 2015), building on earlier work, to suggest that, contra Picallo (1991) and Bernstein (1993), the gender feature does not head its own projection (see also Carstens 2008 for the same conclusion for Bantu) but is rather located on the nominalizing *n*, as in (13). Other earlier proposals include that gender is located on the number projection (Ritter 1993, Carstens 2000, 2003), or that gender is a feature in the lexicon (Carstens 2010, 2011). We point the reader to Kramer (2015) for discussion of the empirical and theoretical advantages of the gender-on-*n* proposal over its competitors.



The structure above is spelled out following two sets of Vocabulary Insertion (VI) rules. The first set of rules allows the spell-out of a given root in the environment of the appropriate gender feature. We illustrate two such rules for Lugwere in (14).

- (14) a. $\sqrt{\text{WOMAN}} \rightarrow \text{-kali} / n_A$ (o-mu-kali ‘woman’, class 1)
 b. $\sqrt{\text{SAALE}} \rightarrow \text{-ti} / n_B$ (e-mi-saale ‘trees’, class 4)

In many languages, there are plenty of stems that are not restricted to a single noun class, resulting in different meanings, as in (15). This suggests that some roots can combine with more than one *n* and that the *n* that merges with the root affects semantic interpretation. We therefore follow Kramer (2014) in implementing encyclopedic licensing conditions that ensure licit *n*+root pairings. Such a pairing is only licensed if there exists an encyclopedic entry for its semantic interpretation. This system thus also elegantly captures the productivity of the noun class system in Bantu: Some roots are only licensed in the presence of one *n*, whereas others are licensed in the presence of more than one *n*, as indicated in the encyclopedic entries in (16).

Swahili

- (15) a. \emptyset -chungwa 'orange, cl. 5' (gender C)
ma-chungwa 'oranges, cl. 6'
b. m-chungwa 'orange tree, cl. 3' (gender B)
mi-chungwa 'orange trees, cl. 4'
- (16) a. $\sqrt{\text{ORANGE}} \rightarrow$ 'orange fruit' / n_C
b. $\sqrt{\text{ORANGE}} \rightarrow$ 'orange tree' / n_B

The second set of rules specifies the spell-out of n as a noun class prefix in a given context. For Lugwere, we illustrate with the following:

- (17) a. $n_A \rightarrow$ ba- / _ PL (class 2)
b. $n_A \rightarrow$ mu- (class 1)

Note that we take number to be a privative feature, following Harley & Ritter (2002), such that what is considered to be the singular is actually the absence of number specification, whereas the plural is the specified number value. In other words, the singular can be represented as [i Num:] and the plural as [i Num:PL], although for reasons of space we abbreviate as in (17). Although this is a departure from how number in Bantu languages is typically represented, it allows for a context-free rule for noun class prefixes (17), in line with general desiderata for DM (Bobaljik 2012).

One consideration for this analytical choice is that singular is never spelled out separately, whereas plural can be. In some languages class 6 functions (or shows a tendency to function) as a default plural marker. A particular example is the plural of augmentative class 21 in Shona, as noted by Déchaine et al. (2014). Whereas the singular simply spells out the augmentative prefix (18), there is no plural of *zi-* and the plural Num head is spelled out separately as *ma-*, homophonous with class 6 (18). This is in line with positing a separate Number projection, as well as using privative number.

Shona

- (18) a. mu-suma
3-suma.tree
'suma tree'
- b. mi-suma
4-suma.tree
'suma trees'
- c. zi-mu-suma
21-3-suma.tree
'big suma tree'

- d. ma-zi-mi-suma
6-21-4-suma.tree
'big suma trees'

There is further evidence of default plural noun classes in the patterns of irregular pairings in some Bantu languages. The singular/plural noun class pairings as discussed to this point are “maximally wide and very dense” (Katamba 2003: 110), making up a majority of noun class pairings. But exceptions are not uncommon, and as Schadeberg (2001) discusses, the exceptions present a problem for any analysis of Bantu noun classes as a combination of number and gender (see Güldemann & Fiedler 2019 for general discussion, and van der Spuy 2010 for an argument from the point of view of SG/PL pairings in Zulu). There are essentially two ways of dealing with the less common noun-class pairings: either they form different genders, essentially assuming homophony in the system (as Carstens 1993 does to account for Swahili class 11/10, and as Kramer 2015 proposes for Romanian SG_F-PL_M combinations); or the system is undergoing a shift to a default plural class, which in many languages seems to be class 6. However, see Devos (2020) for data on the highly complex system of SG/PL pairings in Shangaji, for which neither of these approaches would be sufficient. A more careful investigation of language-specific SG/PL pairings and default plural classes would be required to determine how to capture such a system within this account.

A further strength in adopting the n analysis of gender within DM is that the derivational role of n itself predicts derivational properties of gender (e.g. Armoskaite 2014, Kramer 2015), since the latter is hosted on the former. Under this approach, the categorizing n itself merges with some element (in the basic case, this is the root), and outputs a syntactic object that has nominal properties. We saw already in Section 1 that certain noun classes (and hence gender) have derivational properties: they prefix onto basic nouns to form infinitives, locatives, diminutives, and augmentatives. Under an analysis of Bantu nominal structure that locates gender on n , this derivational ability of noun class prefixes is a direct outcome of general properties of n .

Sections 3 and 4 are dedicated to denominal derivations (diminutives and locatives), but here we will illustrate the mechanics of the deverbal derivation of infinitives, since these are perhaps most commonly cited as examples of derived nominals.

Within the framework adopted in this paper, an infinitive is formed by a nominalizer n merging with a verbal projection. Just as when n merges with a root, the result of this operation is a syntactic object that is a nominal phrase. Above, we followed previous literature in positing that the n that merges with roots can carry a gender feature. Accordingly, “if n has a gender feature when it combines with roots, there is no *a priori* reason that it could not carry a gender feature when it combines with phrases” (Kramer 2015: 186). Positing gender on n then predicts that gender will play a role in derived nominals such as infinitives, and since noun classes are a spell out of gender features, we expect to see noun class prefixes involved in the derivation of infinitives (as well as the other types of derived nominals that will be discussed later).

In fact, the prediction goes one step further. A consequence of the n analysis of gender as detailed by Kramer (2015) is that all nominalizations of a particular category will belong to the same gender, because they are derived by the same n . Kramer (2015) illustrates this point with Romanian action/state nominals (also known as infinitives), which are always feminine

(Iordachioaia and Soare 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2010). This suggests that noun classes will be involved in the formation of infinitives, and furthermore that one and the same *n* takes a verbal projection as its complement and outputs an infinitival phrase. We see the same in Bantu languages, in which infinitives are all in class 15 (see also Hadermann 1999), as illustrated in (19), and function as nouns, triggering class 15 agreement on verbs, as in (20).

Luganda

- (19)
- a. n-a-laba
1SM-PST-see
'I saw.'
 - b. o-ku-(mu-)laba
AUG-15-(1OM-)see
'to see (him/her)

Swahili

- (20) ...kw-enda hu-ko **ku**-li-ni-saidia ku-wa Rais...⁵
15-go DEM-17 15SM-PST-1SG.OM-help 15-be 1.president
'...to go/going there helped me to become president...'

This suggests that there is a dedicated *n* in the inventory that derives infinitives. In a few Bantu languages, infinitives are not formed in class 15 but rather by using class 5, as illustrated for Bafia below. Crucially, it is still consistently one marker that is used to derive infinitives and is therefore in line with the predictions of this account: all nominals of a particular type (here, infinitives) that share a certain set of properties are associated with the same gender value on *n*;⁶ there is simply cross-Bantu variation as to whether that dedicated *n* is class 15 or class 5 (here represented as *n*_{INF}).

Bafia (A50, Guarisma 2000, via Bantu Morphosyntax database SOAS)

(19) Prefix: *ɗɗ*- (class 5)

- a. *rɨ-pés* 'to criticize'
- rɨ-báʔ* 'to break'
- rɨ-ɗúŋ* 'to rot'
- rɨ-làn* 'to flee'
- rɨ-rám* 'to set a trap'
- rɨ-ʃáŋ* 'to sacrifice'

[Guarisma 2000: 90-91]

- b. *b̀l-yíp* *b̀-íí* *b̀l-túmèm* *mín* *ɗí-rèn*
2-woman 2-POSS.1 2-start then 5-cry
'his wives then start to cry'

[Guarisma 2000: 161]

⁵ From <https://www.pressreader.com/tanzania/rai/20160428/281797103186970>.

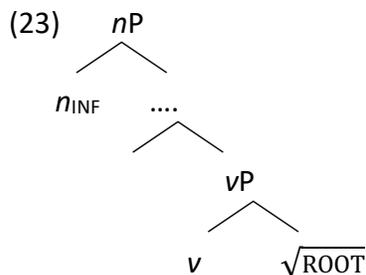
⁶ Note that this is unidirectional: all infinitives are in one class, but this does not entail that this class is dedicated to infinitives only.

Evidence for the verbal nature of the complement of n_{INF} comes from the availability of the object marker $mu-$ between the nominal prefix and the verbal stem in (19), as well as the possibility of marking negation and modality within the infinitive – prefixes sa and ka in (21) and (22), respectively.

Setswana (Creissels & Godard 2005)

- (21) a. ga a leme
 χà-á-lìm-í
 NEG-1SM-plough-FV
 '(s)he does not plough / is not ploughing'
- b. go sa leme
 χò-sà-lìm-í
 INF-NEG-plough-FV
 'not to plough'
- (22) a. o ka lema
 ó-ká-lím-à
 1SM-POT-plough-FV
 '(s)he can/may plough'
- b. go ka lema
 χò-ká-lím-à
 INF-POT-plough-FV
 'to be able to plough'

Given the availability of aspect and mood marking in the infinitives, we posit that the structure of infinitives in Bantu languages is as in (23), wherein n_{INF} merges with an initially verbal projection. If we assume object markers to reflect ϕ -features on v (Iorio 2014, Van der Wal 2015, a.o.), then this verbal projection may be as small as vP , but it could also be larger, including higher inflectional heads like negation and mood, but not tense.



The data presented in this section is in line with the expectation that if gender is on n , then all derived nominals of a particular category should belong to the same gender. As we have shown, infinitives within a given Bantu language belong to a single noun class (in most Bantu languages this is class 15). We can now explore further implications of this approach.

The core n_A, n_B, n_C, n_D , etc that were introduced above as merging with roots to form basic nouns can also productively derive a nominal from a verbal projection. This should not be surprising. It is certainly the case in languages like Romanian and Spanish, where a deverbal noun is assigned one of the genders that typical non-derived nouns take (like feminine in Romanian; Iordachioaia and Soare 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2010). If indeed gender is on n , and noun classes are a spell-out of gender in the context of number, and n has derivational properties, then we would expect at least some subset of noun classes 1-14 to also be able to derive deverbal nominals that have properties consistent with the other types of nouns that are formed using a given gender feature.

To illustrate, recall that class 1 is typically associated with human nouns. When the class 1 marker is prefixed onto a verbal projection (evidence for the verbal status of this projection may come from verbal morphology such as the passive, see also the evidence for the infinitives), the resulting deverbal noun shares some properties common to other nouns in that category, in this case humanness, as shown in (24).

Tshivenda (Poulos 1990, as cited in Mletshe 2017: 32)

(24) class 1 nominalizations

| | | | |
|----|----------------|---|-------------------|
| a. | <i>-fun-w-</i> | > | <i>mu-fun-w-a</i> |
| | love-PASS | | 1-love-PASS-FV |
| | 'be loved' | | 'beloved one' |
| b. | <i>-run-w-</i> | > | <i>mu-run-w-a</i> |
| | send-PASS | | 1-send-PASS-FV |
| | 'be sent' | | 'messenger' |

This example shows that the selectional properties of n_A are such that it can merge with a root or with a verbal projection; the output in both cases is a noun whose referent is a human.

Although we cannot explore the full details of nominalizations in Bantu, we briefly mention that deverbal nominalizations may also feature a different final vowel (FV in (19) above). Mletshe (2017) provides ample discussion of nominalization in Xhosa and provides the overview in *Table 2*. For a detailed syntax of nominalizations in Bantu languages to be complete, the status of these final vowels needs to be further investigated.⁷ In our discussion of grammatical gender, we focus on properties of the nominal prefixes rather than the final vowels in nominalizations, and we refer the reader to Valinande (1984), Mletshe (2017), and references therein for further information. For now, we note that all nominal prefixes that form basic nouns can also combine with verbal projections to form deverbal nouns, and that

⁷ In the spirit of DM, our null hypothesis is that this is not just a quirk of the stem, but reflects a syntactic structure or process (but see Ferrari-Bridgers 2005 for an alternative). The question is thus what part of the structure this final vowel represents. We speculate that a layered n structure as proposed in (47) may work here as well, the suffix *-o* or *-i* being the spell out of a first n , possibly resulting in suffixation by head movement; an alternative is that the suffix spells out a nominal projection in parallel with Aspect or Mood in the verbal projection (which is taken to be the locus of the final vowel, see Julien 2002).

deverbal nouns formed with a given prefix tend to share some set of properties, although we leave open the question of how the assignment of these properties proceeds.⁸

| | class 1 | class 3 | class 5 | class 7 | class 8 | class 9 | class 11 | class 14 |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>lamba</i> 'be hungry' | <i>umlambi</i> 'hungry person' | <i>umlambo</i> 'state of becoming hungry' | <i>ilamba</i> 'chronically hungry person' | <i>isilambi</i> 'severely hungry / poor person' | <i>izilambi</i> 'severely hungry / poor people' | | <i>ulambo</i> 'hunger' | <i>ubulambo</i> 'quality of hunger' |
| <i>godola</i> 'shiver' | <i>umgodoli</i> 'shivering person' | | | <i>isigodoli</i> 'extremely shivering person' | <i>izigodoli</i> 'extremely shivering people' | <i>ingodoli</i> 'expert shiverer' | | |
| <i>khuthala</i> 'be diligent' | <i>umkhuthali</i> 'diligent person' | | | <i>isikhuthali</i> 'extremely diligent person' | <i>izikhuthali</i> 'extremely diligent people' | <i>inkuthalo</i> 'act of being diligent' | | |
| <i>tyeba</i> 'be fat' | | | <i>ityeba</i> 'rich person' | <i>isityebi</i> 'extremely rich person' | <i>izityebi</i> 'extremely rich people' | | | |
| <i>bhitya</i> 'be thin' | | | <i>ibhityo</i> 'thin person' | | | | | |
| <i>luphala</i> 'be old' | <i>umluphali</i> 'old person' | | <i>iluphala</i> 'old person' | <i>isiluphali</i> 'old person' | <i>iziluphali</i> 'old people' | | | |
| <i>bola</i> 'rot' | <i>umboli</i> 'rotten person' | | | <i>isiboli</i> 'extremely rotten person' | <i>iziboli</i> 'extremely rotten people' | | <i>ubolo</i> 'state of rot' | <i>ububolo</i> 'quality of rot' |
| <i>phakama</i> 'rise' | <i>umphakami</i> 'conceited person' | | | <i>isiphakami</i> 'extremely conceited person' | <i>iziphakami</i> 'extremely conceited people' | <i>impakamo</i> 'act of being conceited' | <i>uphakamo</i> 'state of being conceited' | |
| <i>thula</i> 'quiet' | <i>umthuli</i> 'quiet person' | | | <i>isithuli</i> 'extremely quiet person' | <i>izithuli</i> 'extremely quiet people' | <i>intulo</i> 'act of being quiet' | <i>uthulo</i> 'state of being quiet' | |

Table 2: Nominalizations in IsiXhosa (Mletshe 2017: 34)

In this section we have explained the theoretical assumptions of our approach and how it works for basic nouns. Having demonstrated that this can be applied to the derivation of *deverbal* nominalizations, we now turn to the first of two types of *denominal* noun derivations

⁸ The fact that derived nominals share a semantic core does not entail that genders necessarily have a semantic core (compare Kramer 2015 for assignment of interpretable gender features in Amharic) – such an approach has been notoriously unsatisfactory for Bantu noun classes (see e.g. Denny & Creider 1986, Contini-Morava 1997) and is unnecessary if the root + first *n* constitutes the domain for idiomatic interpretation (see Section 4.2). However, outside of this domain the semantic feature(s) associated with a particular gender will be interpreted systematically, for gender G (diminutives, see Section 4) just as well as for gender H (abstract entities). The matter is far from simple, however, and we leave the details of interpretable features associated with gender for further research.

that serve as testing grounds for the analysis: locatives (with the second, diminutives, following in Section 4).

3. Locatives

As shown in Section 1, locatives function as DPs in (most) Bantu languages, and they can be derived in the same way as other nouns, using an *n* head. We posit three values of gender features of locative *n* (see Bresnan 1991 on Bantu locatives as genders):

- (25) n_{16} forms locative nouns, interpretation ‘at’⁹
 n_{17} forms locative nouns, interpretation ‘to’
 n_{18} forms locative nouns, interpretation ‘in’

This works in a straightforward way for inherently locative nouns¹⁰ (26) and general nouns meaning ‘place’, as in (27) and (28), where the basic prefix is locative and merged to a root.

Makhuwa (Van der Wal 2009: 118)

(26)

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---------|----------|---------|------------------|
| a. | va-thí | o-thí | n-thí | | |
| | 16-down | 17-down | 18-down | | |
| | ‘down’ | | | | |
| b. | wa-tsulú | o-tsulú | n-tsulú | | |
| | 16-top | 17-top | 18-top | | |
| | ‘up, on top’ | | | | |
| c. | ekaáshá | e-rí | wá-tsulú | w-a | meétsá ma-kháani |
| | 9.box | 9SM-be | 16-top | 16-CONN | 6.table 6-small |
| | ‘the box is on top of the small table’ | | | | |

Ciluba-Kasai (Kuperus & Mpunga wa Ilunga 1990: 37)

- (27) a. pá-ntú b. kú-ntú c. mú-ntú
16-place 17-place 18-place
‘on a place’ ‘somewhere, elsewhere’ ‘somewhere inside’

Suku (Grégoire 1975: 16, via Zeller to appear)

- (28) a. hó-ma hâ-ma
16-place 16.CONN-POSS.1SG

⁹ The exact interpretation as location, goal, direction etc. is language-specific and also dependent on the lexical semantics of the verb in the sentence that the locative noun is used in.

¹⁰ Some of these, such as ‘up’ and ‘near’, are called *paralocatif* by Grégoire (1975).

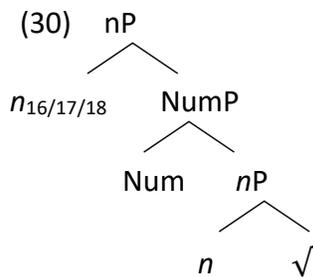
- b. kú-ma kw-â-ma
17-place 17-CONN-POSS.1SG
- c. mú-ma mw-â-ma
18-place 18-CONN-POSS.1SG
all: 'at my place'

Most prefixal locatives, however, are formed by adding locative morphology to an existing noun that retains its basic noun class prefix, resulting in stacked prefixes, as in (29).

Bemba (Marten 2012: 433)

- | | | | |
|------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| (29) | pa-n-gándá | kú-n-gándá | mu-n-gándá |
| | 16-9-house | 17-9-house | 18-9-house |
| | 'at the house' | 'to the house' | 'in the house' |

In our proposal, locatives in languages like Bemba have the structure in (30), where the lower n spells out as the basic prefix, and the higher $n_{16/17/18}$ ¹¹ as the locative prefix:



Our proposal thus maintains a single root and two steps of nominal derivation. This differs from previous accounts proposing a binominal structure (Bresnan & Mchombo 1995; Carstens 1991, 1997, 2008; Caha & Pantcheva 2015, compare to Taraldsen et al. 2018), where the basic noun is a complement to a Place noun, which never has an overt realization. Although agreement and concord may provide enough input to deduce this null noun, it is unexpected that *all* Bantu locatives show a consistent covert realization of such a Place noun, and we thus consider a mono-nominal account more attractive. Furthermore, our analysis accounts for two points of parametric variation in Bantu locatives: the complement of $n_{16/17/18}$, and the suffixal marking of locatives. These are discussed in turn.

3.1. Complement of $n_{16/17/18}$

So far, we have seen $n_{16/17/18}$ take a root complement (inherently locative nouns like in (27)), or a NumP complement (stacked prefixes as in (29)). In some languages, however, there is evidence that the complement must be bigger, specifically that it is a DP (more on earlier analyses positing a DP complement follows below). The evidence comes from the presence of

¹¹ We use 16/17/18 as a stand-in for the classes that behave in this way in a given language, considering that not all three are equally productive in each language.

the augment – the initial vowel or pre-prefix attached to nouns and often also to nominal modifiers. Not all Bantu languages have retained the augment, but a subset shows it, as illustrated for Kwanyama in (31) and Lugwere in (32). For most classes in Kwanyama the augment is an invariable *o-*.

Kwanyama (Halme 2004: 34, 37)

- (31) a. **o**-mu-nhu
aug-1-person
- b. **o**-shi-pundi
AUG-7-chair

Lugwere

- (32) a. **á**-ka-tále
aug-12-market
- b. **ó**-mu-sáále
AUG-3-tree

We first discuss the augment and its syntactic status, before returning to the structure of locatives comparing Lugwere and Kwanyama.

For Zulu and Xhosa, respectively, de Dreu (2008) and Visser (2008) have argued that the augment is a determiner element, located in D (and similarly see Ndayiragije et al. 2012 for Kirundi, Asimwe 2014 on Runyakore-Rukiga, and Ngoboka 2016 for Kinyarwanda). Despite the lack of a one-to-one correlation between a definite interpretation and the augment, positing the augment in D is plausible for Kwanyama and Lugwere too, as the augment is omitted in contexts where not a DP but an NP structure would be expected (cf. Taraldsen 2010, Buell & de Dreu 2013, among others). The augment is omitted in Lugwere, for example, for nominal predication (33) and for a free-choice reading under negation (34).

Lugwere

- (33) Oogwo ___-mu-sáále.
3.DEM.DIST ___-3-tree
'That is a tree.'
- (34) Tí-n-a-gúl-íre ___-cíí-ntu cóóncóna.
NEG-1SG.SM-PST-buy-PFV ___-7-thing 7.any
'I didn't buy anything.'

In Kwanyama, augmentless nouns are used, for example, for vocatives and negative predicative nouns. Similarly, the augment is absent on the “inner” nouns in words derived via the associative *na-*, where only the prefix (not the augment) of the original noun appears, as shown in (35).

Kwanyama (Halme 2004: 37)

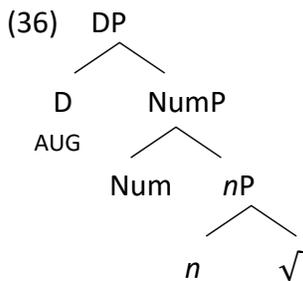
(35) a. o-shi-pundi
 AUG-7-chair
 'chair' (7)

o-mu-na-shi-pundi
 AUG-1-IND-7-chair
 'chairperson' (1)

b. o-ma-pya
 AUG-6-fields
 'fields' (6)

o-mu-na-ma-pya
 AUG-1-IND-6-field
 'farmer' (1)

The augment in Lugwere and Kwanyama thus functions separately from the prefix, and is proposed to be located in D in both languages, as represented in (36).



With this background we can return to the locatives, where Lugwere and Kwanyama interestingly differ in the absence vs. presence of the augment on the basic noun: in Lugwere the augment cannot appear in the complement to the locative prefix (37), whereas in Kwanyama it does intervene (38).

Lugwere

(37) a. ó-mú-(*a-)ka-tále
 AUG-18-(*AUG-)12-market
 'on the market'

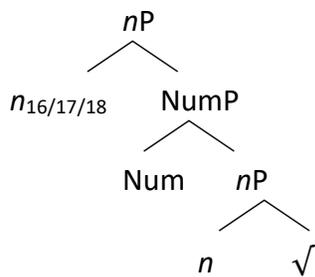
b. ó-mu-(*o-)mu-sáále
 AUG-18-(*AUG-)3-tree
 'in the tree'

Kwanyama (Halme 2004: 29,31)¹²

- (38) a. pu+omuti > p~~o~~muti ‘beside the tree’
 b. ku+oshipundi > k~~o~~shipundi ‘on the chair’
 c. mu+eumbo > m~~e~~umbo ‘inside the house’

In Lugwere, the fact that the augment cannot appear between the inner basic prefix (*ka-*, *mu-*) and the outer locative prefix (*mu-*) suggests that the complement of $n_{16/17/18}$ cannot be a DP but must be a NumP in this language (as the basic noun can be plural). The presence of the augment in Kwanyama locatives suggests the opposite, that $n_{16/17/18}$ takes a DP complement. Languages thus differ in the size of the complement of $n_{16/17/18}$.¹³

(39) Structure of locatives in Lugwere



¹² Note that the locative prefixes in Kwanyama are indeed *pu-*, *ku-*, and *mu-*, not *po-*, *ko-*, and *mo-*, as can be seen in locatives of nouns that never take an augment (Halme 2004: 65, 66):

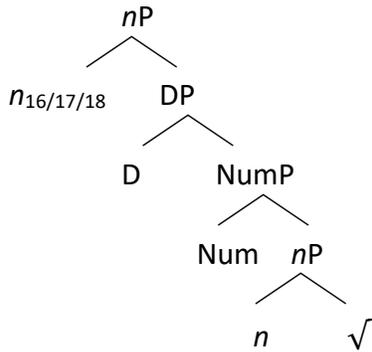
- i. ku+Europa > kuÉúropa ‘to Europe’
 ii. pu+ina > puíná/pwiíná ‘beside his/her mother’

¹³ For languages that no longer have the augment, such as Chichewa, it is more difficult to establish what the size of the complement is, because there is no segmental marking of a presumed D head. A reviewer suggests that demonstratives can be indicative of a DP complement, but this only works if the status of demonstratives is clear: Carstens (1997) suggests for Chichewa that they “seem to be adjoined like adjectives, rather than D⁰s”.

Chichewa (Botne & Kulumeke 1995: xxvi)

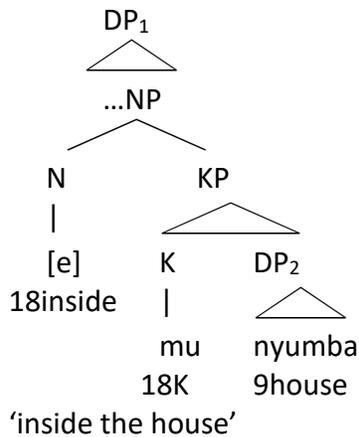
- | | | |
|----|----------------|--------------------|
| a. | m-sika | ku-m-sika |
| | 3-market | 17-3-market |
| | ‘a/the market’ | ‘on/at the market’ |
| b. | chi-tsime | mu-chi-tsime |
| | 7-well | 18-7-well |
| | ‘a/the well’ | ‘in a/the well’ |

(40) Structure of locatives in Kwanyama



This is where our analysis crucially differs from earlier proposals, notably Carstens (1997)¹⁴, but also Caha & Pantcheva (2016). Both propose an analysis with a full DP complement to, respectively, a K(ase) node (hosting the locative prefix) or a Place node.

(41) structure of Bantu locatives according to Carstens (1997, 2008)



If the augment is indeed a reflection of D, we would expect to see the augment between the locative prefix and the inner noun's prefix in many more (if not all) languages with augments. This is not the case, and neither does the presence of the augment vary by noun class, suggesting that the complement must in many languages be smaller than a DP, as expected under our proposal. The different size of the complement that our analysis allows is the first of three parameters that capture the crosslinguistic variation introduced in Section 1.

Parameter A: Does $n_{16/17/18}$ take NumP or DP as its complement?

¹⁴ For further discussion of the drawbacks of Carstens' (1997) analysis of locatives in Chichewa, see Lee (in prep).

3.2. Locatives with suffix *-(i)ni*

A second point of variation in Bantu locatives concerns the prefixal and/or suffixal marking of locative nouns. In a subset of Bantu languages, locatives are not derived by a prefix, but by the suffix *-(i)ni*, especially in Bantu zones E and (south) G (Gregoire 1975), as illustrated in (42).

Gikuyu (Mugane 1997: 33)

- (42) a. mũ-twe
3-head
'a/the head'
- b. mũ-twe-inĩ
3-head-loc
'by/on the head'
- c. ma-nyũmba
6-9.house
'houses (collective)'
- d. ma-nyũmba-inĩ
6-9.house-loc
'by/on/in the houses (collective)'

Nevertheless, even for locatives derived by suffixation of *-(i)ni*, in some languages verbal agreement reveals the same distinction for classes 16/17/18 (43). This suggests that the three locative gender categories are still present but not overt (but see section 5.1 for discussion of further variation).

Swahili (Carstens 1997: 402)

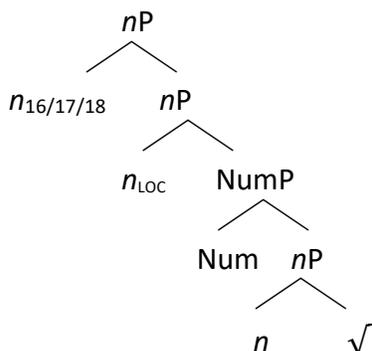
- (43) Nyumba-ni pa-/ku-/m-na wa-tu w-engi.
9.house-LOC 16-/17-/18-have 2-people 2-many
'In/at the house are many people.'

Carstens (1997) proposes for Swahili that the *-(i)ni* suffix spells out the same head (K) as locative prefixes in other languages. However, this analysis predicts a complementary distribution of locative prefixes and suffixes, which is not borne out in all languages: a look at a broader range of Bantu languages reveals that there are some in which derived locatives are marked by both a prefix and a suffix. In Cuwabo and Makhuwa, the locative prefix is obligatory, and the suffix is omitted in case the noun has a locative meaning inherently (Gregoire 1975, Guerois 2014).^{15,16} Thus, in Cuwabo (44) the locative 'in the water' is marked by both the prefix

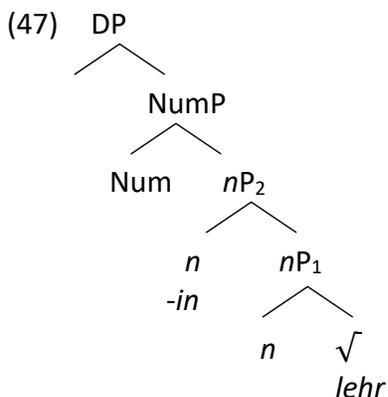
¹⁵ Guerois (2014: 175) suggests that "a word [that is] inherently locative may not require to carry further locative information, and vice versa". A similar generalisation is made for Zulu by Taylor (1996: 292) stating that locatives not taking *-ini* "denote entities which are, in a sense, already locative in character".

¹⁶ Note that locatives in Cuwabo are not PPs (i.e. the prefix is not a preposition), as locatives can trigger subject marking in inversion:

(46) Structure of locatives (when *-(i)ni* is present)



Considering that locatives are denominal nouns, it stands to reason that they involve *n* selecting for *nP*. Such stacking of multiple *ns* can be seen crosslinguistically, for instance in English nouns like *father-hood* and *own-er-ship*, Italian *pizz-eria*, and German *Lehr-er-in* ‘female teacher’; for the latter Kramer (2015:208) proposes the structure in (47). See also the derivation of Bantu diminutives in Section 4.



Summarizing, in languages that mark locatives with both a prefix and a suffix, the lower *n_{LOC}* is spelled out by *-(i)ni* (unless the noun is locative already), and the higher locative *n*, providing the interpretable gender features, is spelled out as the prefix of class 16/17/18, with the VI rules as in (48).

(48) Selected Vocabulary Insertion Rules for pre- and suffixal locatives in Makhuwa

- n_{LOC}* → -ni
- n₁₆* → wa-
- n₁₇* → o-
- n₁₈* → m-

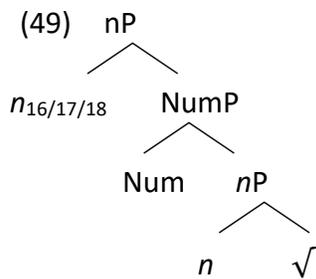
The proposed structure for Bantu locatives in (46) forms our starting point to explain two main points of crosslinguistic variation: For a language L,

1. Can locatives in L be marked by a suffix?

2. If yes, are locatives in L also marked by a prefix?

We discuss these in turn, concluding that the first point concerns syntactic variation (presence vs. absence of the n_{LOC} head), whereas the second point is based in morphological variation (different VI rules).

Concerning the first point, we have seen languages with the locative suffix *-(i)ni* (e.g. Swahili, Cuwabo, Gikuyu), and languages without a locative suffix (e.g. Chichewa, Lugwere, Kwanyama). For the second group of languages, which never show a suffix, we find it implausible that acquirers would receive enough input to postulate an n_{LOC} head that is never spelled out. We therefore assume that languages that form locatives just by prefixing (such as Lugwere or Chichewa) only have the head $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$ (specified for certain locative semantics) that can directly select a NumP as the complement. The structure is as represented in (49), repeated from above:



The second parameter, then, can be formulated as follows:

Parameter B: Do locatives involve a head n_{LOC} in addition to $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$? (to be adjusted)

This parameter distinguishes between the first row in Table 3 ‘ n_{LOC} absent’ and the second row ‘ n_{LOC} overt’.

| | $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$ overt | $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$ null |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| n_{LOC} absent | Chichewa cf. <i>pa-nyanja (16-9.lake)</i> | (unlearnable?) |
| n_{LOC} overt | Cuwabo cf. <i>mu-máánjé-ni (18-6.water-LOC)</i> | Swahili cf. <i>nyumba-ni (9.house-LOC)</i> |

Table 3: (Preliminary) points of variation in Bantu locatives

The second point of crosslinguistic variation is found within the languages that show a locative suffix: some also spell out a locative prefix (Makhuwa, Cuwabo), whereas others never show such a prefix (Swahili, Chaga). We argue that this variation is only superficial in some languages: encoded in the VI rules, but not in the syntax. Locatives in these types of languages are proposed to have the underlying syntactic structure as in (46), with an n_{LOC} head as well as a higher locative head $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$, but whether the higher head is spelled out or remains silent distinguishes between the two columns in Table 3, ‘ $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$ overt’ vs. ‘ $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$ null’. However, the presence of this null head depends on the evidence the language provides, and this varies.

For languages without overt locative prefixes, there may still be compelling reasons to argue for a null presence of the higher head, rather than its absence. Consider again Swahili, where the n_{LOC} head is spelled out as the suffix *-ni*, and the higher head $n_{16/17/18}$ is systematically null, as specified in the VI rules in (50). Although all three locative genders in such a language have the same phonological form, the differences in concord and agreement patterns (cf. (43) above), as well as the semantic specification between classes 16-17-18, show that the higher n head is present and specified as $n_{16}/n_{17}/n_{18}$, but simply lacks phonological realization. Additionally, this evidence will be sufficient for the Swahili acquirer to posit different gender features.

(50) sample Vocabulary Insertion Rules for non-prefixal locatives

$n_{\text{LOC}} \rightarrow -ni$

$n_{16} \rightarrow \emptyset$

$n_{17} \rightarrow \emptyset$

$n_{18} \rightarrow \emptyset$

However, in Kĩĩtharaka such evidence is difficult to obtain. Class 18 has disappeared, class 16 only occurs in one noun (*ba-ntu* ‘place’) and the pronominal demonstrative ‘here/there’ (51), and class 17 functions as a default subject marker also used in expletive constructions as in (53) (and also on *kwarĩ* in (51)). Locatives, which are derived by *-ini*, thus cannot trigger subject agreement or concord, shown in (52) and (53).

Kĩĩtharaka

(51) Káuma águ káathi bantû kwarĩ na ngaraĩ ímbíĩthu.

ka-um-a **a-gu** ka-a-thi **ba-ntu** **kû**-a-ri na n-garaĩ î-bĩth-u
 12SM-leave-FV 16-DEM 12SM-PST-go 16-placeEXPL.SM-PST-be and 9-charcoal 9-burn-STAT

‘He left that place and went to a place that had charcoal’

(52) mbaasi-iní î-rá / *a-rá / *kû-rá
 5.bus-LOC 5-DEM.DIST 16-DEM.DIST 17-DEM.DIST
 ‘in that bus’

(53) (Ndúkání) í kúthúũngĩré múntû.
 n-duka-ini ni **kû**-thũũngĩr-ire mú-ntû
 9-shop-LOC FOC EXPL.SM-enter-PFV 1-person
 ‘(In the shop) there entered somebody.’

This suggests that Kĩĩtharaka does not have a head $n_{16/17/18}$, but can still form its general locatives through n_{LOC} , spelling out as *-ini*. The variation is thus as in Table 4:

| | $n_{16/17/18}$ absent | $n_{16/17/18}$ overt | $n_{16/17/18}$ null |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| n_{LOC} absent | (unlearnable?) | Chichewa e.g. <i>pa-nyanja</i> | (unlearnable?) |
| n_{LOC} overt | Kĩĩtharaka e.g. <i>mbaási-ini</i> | Cuwabo e.g. <i>mu-máánjé-ní</i> | Swahili e.g. <i>nyumba-ni</i> |

Table 4: (Preliminary) points of variation in Bantu locatives

The syntactic parameter can be adjusted to the following, leaving purely morphological variation (i.e. the null spell-out) to the VI rules:

Parameter B': Do locatives involve n_{LOC} , $n_{16/17/18}$, or both?

A third point of variation is language-internal, and concerns which locatives in a language require the suffix *-(i)ni* – this provides further evidence that the double layer of locative *ns* is on the right track. In languages with a locative suffix, there is an additional small class of inherently/semantically locative nouns that are derived without the *-(i)ni* marker but which appear in environments where other locative nouns do require the suffix, and which show locative behavior otherwise, e.g. in concord and agreement.¹⁷ Example (54) from Chaga shows the unmarked locative *sangazra* ‘(at the) market’ in (54)b, and the marked *mesa-nyi* ‘on the table’ in (54)a, both triggering locative subject marking on the verb (in class 16 or 17).

Kivunjo-Chaga (Moshi 1995: 131)

- (54) a. Mesa-nyi ha-wozre shitapu na ma-karitasi.
9.table-LOC 16SM-have 8.books and 6-papers
‘On the table, there are books and papers.’
Lit. ‘On the table has books and papers.’
- b. Sangazra ha/ku-wozre soko na malruwu.
9.market 16SM/17SM-have 9.beans and 6.bananas
Lit. ‘At the market has beans and bananas.’

The existence of such semantically as well as functionally locative nouns without *-(i)ni* suggests that the function of n_{LOC} (the suffix) is to derive an underspecified locative noun, and that the higher head contributes one of the three interpretable locative genders.¹⁸ Note, again, that the

¹⁷ While a detailed investigation of the proposed inherent [loc] feature is outside the scope of this paper, we suggest that an approach in the spirit of Steriopolo’s (2018) split representation of semantic gender and grammatical gender may be applied to formalize this notion. Semantic gender – or in this case a general [loc] feature – is present on the root in semantically locative nouns, while grammatical gender occurs on *n*. Under such a proposal, the set of roots that has an inherent semantic [loc] feature would be language-specific.

¹⁸ This is reminiscent of preposition drop for general locative nouns in languages such as Greek, but the analyses proposed in, for example, Ioannidou & Den Dikken (2009), Terzi (2010), Gehrke and Lekakou (2013) cannot be applied here for the simple reason that we are dealing with DPs here, not PPs.

higher head may or may not be spelled out, as the same is seen in Cuwabo *mu-má-ánjé-ní* ‘in the water’ vs. *óo-kobélâ* ‘on the riverbank’ in (44).

A remaining question in these languages concerns the presence of n_{LOC} in locatives that do not show the suffix. There are two options. Either the locative complement of $n_{16/17/18}$ is *always* formally derived by a lower n_{LOC} but receives a null spell-out when the noun is inherently locative (compare the analysis that an Appl(icative) head is present but invisible in lexically ditransitive verbs like ‘give’, Pylkkänen 2008). Alternatively, we may speculate that $n_{16/17/18}$ requires a locative noun as its complement, which may be derived by n_{LOC} (spelled out as *-ini*) or inherently specified as locative (no *-ini*).

We thus see that Bantu locatives may be analyzed using a layered- n nominal structure. Within Bantu locatives, we can identify several points of variation, summarized in Table 5.

| | $n_{16/17/18}$ absent | $n_{16/17/18}$ overt | $n_{16/17/18}$ null |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| n_{LOC} absent | (unlearnable?) | Chichewa e.g. <i>pa-nyanja</i> | (unlearnable?) |
| n_{LOC} overt | Kĩĩtharaka e.g. <i>mbaásini</i> | Cuwabo e.g. <i>mu-máánjé-ni</i> | Chaga, Swahili e.g. <i>nyumba-ni</i> |
| n_{LOC} null | (unlearnable?) | Cuwabo e.g. <i>óo-kobélâ</i> | Chaga e.g. <i>sangazra</i> |

Table 5: Variation in Bantu locatives

In summary, so far we have discussed the behavior of gender on n in infinitives and other deverbal derivations, as well as in locative denominal derivations. We have also provided an account of the parametric variation encountered in locative derivation. Having demonstrated the ways in which the present analysis allows us to capture intra- and inter-language variation in one major type of derived nouns, we now turn our attention to another area of nominal derivation: diminutives and augmentatives.

4. Derived diminutives and augmentatives

In languages such as German and Russian, diminutives have been analysed as resulting from merger of n with an nP (Wiltschko 2006, Wiltschko and Steriopolo 2007, Kramer 2015, Steriopolo 2017). This double n layer was already introduced for locatives (based on the German *Lehrerin* example in (47) above), and we argue that the same structure underlies diminutives and augmentatives in Bantu languages. As mentioned in the introduction, diminutives and augmentatives can be derived by replacing the basic prefix, or stacking the derivational prefix onto the basic prefix.¹⁹ Despite this cross-Bantu morphological variation found in diminutive and augmentative derived nominals, we contend that their underlying structure is the same across the board, and that variation is in the spell-out.

¹⁹ A further Bantu diminutive strategy is the suffix *-ana* (from *muana* ‘child’); we refer to Gibson et al. (2017) for further data.

4.1. Stacking prefixes

The first pattern for diminutives and augmentatives shows transparent stacking of nominal morphology. Consider the data from Shona, in (55), in which the addition of a second prefix onto an already well-formed prefix-noun combination changes the interpretation of the noun, yielding diminutive semantics.

Shona (Déchaine et al. 2014: 35)

- | | | | | |
|------|----|----------------------|----|----------------------|
| (55) | a. | mu -kómáná | b. | va -kómáná |
| | | 1-boy | | 2-boy |
| | | 'boy' | | 'boys' |
| | c. | ka -mu-kómáná | d. | tu -va-kómáná |
| | | 12-1-boy | | 13-2-boy |
| | | 'tiny boy' | | 'tiny boys' |

The most widespread strategy for deriving diminutives is to use class 12/13 (gender G), as in (55), but this is language-specific (Gibson et al. 2017). A restricted number of languages use class 19; class 7/8 (Gender D) also takes on diminutive or augmentative semantics in some languages when used derivationally (Gibson et al. 2017).

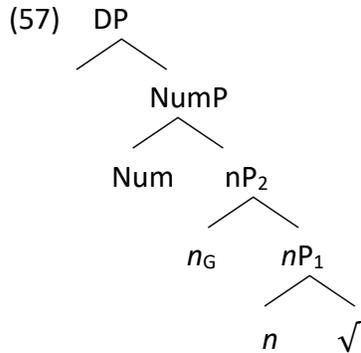
Augmentatives are derived in a similar fashion, a widespread strategy being the use of class 5/6 (Gender C) or class 7/8 (gender D) to contribute augmentative meaning when stacked onto an already well-formed prefix + noun, as in (56).

Nsenga (Simango 2012: 178)

- | | | | |
|------|----|-----------|---------------|
| (56) | a. | mu-nda | chi-mu-nda |
| | | 3-garden | 7-3-garden |
| | | 'garden' | 'big garden' |
| | b. | mi-nda | vi-mi-nda |
| | | 4-gardens | 8-4-gardens |
| | | 'gardens' | 'big gardens' |

Other strategies employed for deriving augmentatives include using a dedicated class 21 or 22. For ease of exposition, we henceforth restrict the discussion to diminutives, but the same structural analysis should be applicable to augmentatives.

Considering the morphology of diminutives and augmentatives as illustrated in (55) and (56), we propose that the syntactic structure of a diminutive in a language like Shona is as in (57), inspired by Kramer (2015), Wiltschko (2006), Wiltschko & Steriopolo (2007), Steriopolo (2008). Here, we illustrate this for gender G, i.e. classes 12/13.



The lower *n* is spelled out as the basic prefix, and the higher *n* as the diminutive prefix, according to the VI rules in (58).

(58) sample Vocabulary Insertion Rules for stacking diminutives

- $n_G \rightarrow tu- / \dots PL$ (class 13)
- $n_A \rightarrow va- / \dots PL$ (class 2)
- $n_G \rightarrow ka-$ (class 12)
- $n_A \rightarrow mu-$ (class 1)

We want to discuss three aspects of the proposed structure and VI rules.

First, the notation in (58) indicates that the diminutive prefix is n_G (rather than a specialized or dedicated prefix that might be labeled n_{DIM}). This reflects that notion that the prefix that can be interpreted as diminutive does not differ in nature from a basic prefix (in line with Déchaine et al.'s 2014 analysis). It is its position relative to other elements on the nominal spine – specifically the fact that it merges with an nP rather than a root – that determines its interpretation. This is a departure from Carstens (2008), who posits a specialized null morpheme with diminutive semantics and a gender specification, but it is in line with the fact that in many Bantu languages, diminutivizing prefixes can also occur as basic prefixes, without introducing diminutive interpretation to the nominal (see the end of Section 4.2 for further discussion and analysis).

Second, as already mentioned, we assume Number to be privative, i.e. singular is the absence of a plural feature, and hence the context-free VI rules suffice to spell out the singular of both *n* in Shona, resulting in *ka-mu-komana* ‘little boy’.

Third, the analytical choice to have only a single Num projection in the diminutive structure is a departure from the analysis put forth in Déchaine et al. (2014).²⁰ There are two primary reasons to prefer the structure with a single NumP. First, it accounts for the fact that the lower and higher *n* have the same value for Number, e.g. gender D-B combination can be

²⁰ The structure we propose here with one NumP is not universal. In Yiddish, for example, evidence from double plural marking in diminutives (Lowenstamm 2007) suggests that the derivation of diminutives in this language proceeds via a diminutivizing *n* merging with (at least) NumP, putting it more in line with the locative *ns* in Bantu languages.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| i. der xazər the pig ‘the pig’ | ii. di xazeyr-əm the pig-PL ‘the pigs’ | iii. di xazeyr-əm-l-əx the pig-PL-DIM-PL ‘the little pigs’ | (Lowenstamm 2007) |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|

noun classes 7-3 (both singular) or 8-4 (both plural) for the stacked augmentatives but never 7-4 or 8-3 (mixed number). This also entails that spell-out can be sensitive not just to the adjacent NumP but to any nearest NumP, as in (24) (see Moskal 2015, Moskal and Smith 2016, and papers in Kastner and Moskal 2018 for sensitivity to non-adjacent heads). This is indicated by ‘...’ in the conditioning environment of the plural VI rules in (58). The proposal introduces a structural difference between diminutives/augmentatives (one NumP) and locatives (two NumPs) that will have desirable outcomes for alternative agreement and predictions regarding the presence or absence of stacking prefixes, as will be discussed in Section 5.

Following Wiltschko & Steriopo (2007), this structure predicts that the features on the outer head should determine the formal properties of the noun as a whole. In German, in which the diminutive also functions as a head, this prediction is borne out: diminutivized nouns are always neuter, regardless of the gender of the basic noun (Wiltschko & Steriopo 2007). This entails that the diminutive *n* in German carries a neuter gender feature, as in (59).

- (59) der Baum (M) → das Bäum-chen (N)
 die Flasche (F) → das Fläsch-chen (N)

In Bantu, when a derivational prefix is attached to a noun, this outer prefix determines the formal properties of the derived noun, regardless of the gender of the basic noun. This is for example visible in agreement on the verb. As illustrated in (60), when a diminutive noun is the subject, only the gender of the higher *n* can determine agreement on the verb.

Shona (Déchaine et al. 2014, adapted)

- (60) Chì-mù-kómáná chì-/*à-nò-fámbá.
 7-1-boy 7_{SM}-/*1_{SM}-HAB-walk
 ‘(The) slim boy walks.’

With this simple structure and already existing VI rules, we can understand stacking diminutives. However, as mentioned, there is a second pattern for diminutive formation.

4.2. Non-stacking prefixes

In some Bantu languages, a diminutive or augmentative is not formed by stacking an additional nominal prefix onto the well-formed basic prefix + noun, but rather by “replacing” the basic prefix with the diminutive or augmentative prefix, as in (61), repeated from (5).

Chindamba (Edelsten and Lijongwa 2010: 36-38)

- (61) a. li-piki b. ma-piki c. ka-piki d. tu-piki
 5-tree 6-tree 12-tree 13-tree
 ‘tree’ ‘trees’ ‘small tree’ ‘small trees’

This raises the question of whether the surface distinction between stacking and non-stacking noun class morphology reflects a difference in syntactic structure. To our knowledge, there is no evidence that stacking diminutives behave differently from non-stacking diminutives in the syntax. The lack of a syntactic correlate of stacking vs. non-stacking diminutive

morphology suggests that the variation is not structural but only morphophonological. We therefore propose that the structure for these non-stacking diminutives is the same as for stacking diminutives, and the difference between the two should be captured in VI rules: non-stacking languages include a VI rule whereby *n* is spelled out as null in the context of a higher adjacent *n*, as in (62) (compare the VI rules for suffixal locatives in (50)). This rule may apply generally in a language, or only to specific genders (as shown below for Rangi, and in section 5.1 for new data on Swahili).

(62) sample Vocabulary Insertion Rules for non-stacking diminutives

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| $n_X \rightarrow \emptyset / n$ | |
| $n_G \rightarrow tu- / \dots PL$ | (class 13) |
| $n_A \rightarrow va- / \dots PL$ | (class 2) |
| $n_G \rightarrow ka-$ | (class 12) |
| $n_A \rightarrow mu-$ | (class 1) |

A strong argument that the variation between stacking vs. non-stacking derivation is in the VI rules – and not in the structure – comes from “mixed” languages in which both stacking and non-stacking diminutives are attested. This is illustrated for Rangi below, but includes also Herero (Kavari and Marten 2009), Bemba (Hoch, n.d.), and other languages (see Gibson et al. 2017). In Rangi, nouns in class 1, 5, and 9 form diminutives by non-stacking prefixes (63)a), while nouns in all other classes are form diminutives by stacking prefixes (63)b).

Rangi (Gibson 2012: 32-33)

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------------|---|--------------|------------------------|
| (63) a. | mw-aana | `child' (cl. 1) | > | ka-ana | `small child' (cl. 12) |
| | mw-iivi | `thief' (cl. 1) | > | k-iivi | `small thief' (cl. 12) |
| | m̩-hiinja | `girl' (cl. 1) | > | ka-hiinja | `small girl' (cl. 12) |
| | i-baanda | `hut' (cl. 5) | > | ka-baanda | `small hut' (cl. 12) |
| | n-joka | `snake' (cl. 5) | > | ka-joka | `small snake' (cl. 12) |
| | nyenyeeri | `star' (cl. 9) | > | ka-nyenyeeri | `small star' (cl. 12) |
| b. | mw-iiwi | `arrow' (cl.3) | > | ka-mw-iiwi | `small arrow' (cl. 12) |
| | m̩-ti | `tree' (cl. 3) | > | ka-m̩-ti | `small tree' (cl. 12) |
| | kɪ-nt̩ | `thing' (cl. 7) | > | ka-kɪ-nt̩ | `small thing' (cl. 12) |
| | ʊ-loongo | `lie' (cl. 11) | > | ka-ʊ-loongo | `small lie' (cl. 12) |
| | k̩-l̩ | `foot' (cl. 15) | > | ka-k̩-l̩ | `small foot' (cl. 12) |

Both types of derived nouns are proposed to include two *n*Ps, the lower one of which has an overt form in some classes and is spelled out as null for other classes. Such variation is a typical case that can be captured by variation in VI rules, where spell-out of the lower *n* is

gender-specific. The VI rules for Rangi genders A (class 1/2) and D (class 7/8) would thus be as follows, with only the former including a null spell-out in the context of an adjacent *n*.²¹

(64) sample Vocabulary Insertion Rules for mixed diminutives

- $n_A \rightarrow \emptyset / n$
 $n_A \rightarrow va- / \dots PL$ (class 2)
 $n_A \rightarrow mu-$ (class 1)
- $n_D \rightarrow vI- / \dots PL$ (class 8)
 $n_D \rightarrow kI$ (class 7)
- $n_G \rightarrow ka-$ (class 12)

A reasonable question for this analysis is whether the underlying double *nP* structure can be acquired in the languages that have partial or no stacking for derived nouns, considering that one *nP* is a null morpheme (similar to Carstens’s 1991 Zero-morpheme Licensing Principle). In languages like Rangi, where only some of the noun classes have a null morpheme in diminutive derivation, the other classes provide evidence for the language acquirer to postulate a second *n* in the derivation. Additionally, the consistent and very clear semantics of the derived nouns (diminutive, in these cases) is likely sufficient to distinguish them from non-derived nouns.²²

To illustrate the latter point, and to provide another argument in favor of the proposed Num-*n-n* structure across the board, consider the primary versus secondary use of the same prefix: While classes 12/13 (and sometimes 7/8) in many languages derive diminutive meaning, these classes also contain nouns which occur with this noun class prefix as their basic prefix, without triggering any diminutive interpretation of the noun, for example in (65)a. This is in contrast to the diminutive interpretation that is required when class 12/13 replaces the basic prefix of other nouns (65)b. Thus, the surface morphology does not differ between the two, but under the current analysis the basic nouns in (65)a involve only one *nP* and NumP, whereas the diminutives in (65)b have a layered underlying structure involving two *nPs*.²³

²¹ The null spell out takes precedence over the context-free rule because it is more specified. We assume that it takes precedence over the plural context rule presumably because *n* is directly adjacent whereas PL is more remote, or potentially merely because pruning rules that bleed other insertion rules are thought to apply first.

²² It is unlikely, though, that multiple *silent* *nPs* can be postulated by the acquirer on the basis of input containing a single prefix.

²³ Note that a noun that is already in class 12 cannot be derived in class 12 (see i). This may be due to haplology (cf. Kinyalolo’s Constraint, Carstens 2005), preventing two identical prefixes from appearing in sequence. The result of the logically possible derivation will thus appear with one prefix, which is interpreted as its basic class and never as a diminutive. See Déchaine et al. (2014) for a different analysis of these facts in terms of prefix raising.

- i. *akakasaale int. ‘small arrow’
 *akakatale int. ‘small market’

Luganda (Judith Nakayiza, p.c.)

- (65) a. aka-tale 'market' (class 12)
aka-saale 'arrow' (class 12)
- b. aka-solo 'small animal' (cl.12)²⁴ cf. eci-solo 'animal' (cl.7)
aka-sajja 'small man' (cl.12) cf. omu-sajja 'man' (cl.1)

We can think of this as follows: the root and the first *n*P constitute the domain for idiomatic interpretation (see Marantz 1996); a secondly merged *n* will contribute predictable meaning (diminutive). This is captured if diminutives (and augmentatives) have the same structure across the board, regardless of their non-stacking or stacking spell-out. We think that this is preferable over the alternative view, where basic and secondary prefixes need to be seen as homophonous classes/genders.²⁵

This brings us to the third parameter to capture the variation in Bantu DP structure:

Parameter C: Do the VI rules feature a rule dictating null spellout of the lower *n* in the presence of an adjacent *n*?

In summary, diminutives (and augmentatives) are proposed to have the same underlying structure across Bantu languages, involving two *n* heads. The variation consists in whether VI rules feature a rule for zero spell out of the lower of two adjacent *n* heads; the consequences for this rule are further discussed in section 5.1.

5. Combining and comparing locatives and diminutives

With the structures and VI rules for locatives and diminutives as proposed in the previous sections, we can make various predictions. One concerns the combination of the VI rules for each derivation within a language, and a second is the crosslinguistically valid difference between the structures for locatives and diminutives. We discuss these in turn.

5.1. Adjacent *ns* and null spell-out

Languages in which the diminutive prefix replaces the basic prefix are proposed to feature a VI rule as in (62), repeated below as (66), whereby a *n* is zero if it is adjacent to a higher *n*.

$$(66) \quad n \rightarrow \emptyset / n$$

The VI rule makes strong predictions if we look at diminutives and locatives together. If the rule holds for the whole language, then it affects not just diminutives but locatives as well. As we have seen in Section 3.2, locatives can also have two *n* heads: n_{LOC} for the suffix $-(i)ni$ and

²⁴ This can also refer to a man's private parts.

²⁵ In their analysis of class prefixes in Shona, Déchaine et al. (2014) also reject a homophony analysis of these prefixes, but they argue that differences in meaning when a prefix occurs as a primary rather than a secondary/stacked prefix are due to the semantics of a dedicated set of projections on the nominal spine. In their proposal, each projection corresponds to a particular interpretation, and the semantics that a prefix contributes are determined by the projection at which it merges.

$n_{16/17/18}$ for the prefix. If diminutives in a given language are non-stacking, this means that the VI rules contain a rule for zero spell out of the lower n in the context of adjacent n heads. This in turn entails that the rule should also apply in locatives, that is, the lower n_{LOC} should spell out as zero. As a consequence, we expect non-stacking diminutives only in languages where locatives do not have two ns at all, such as Chichewa (only $n_{16/17/18}$) or Kĩĩtharaka (only n_{LOC}).²⁶

Vice versa, our proposal predicts that languages with a bipartite locative, showing the suffix and evidence for $n_{16/17/18}$ such as Cuwabo and Swahili, do not feature a zero spell-out rule as in (66) (or else the $-(i)ni$ suffix would not be spelled out), and hence they are predicted to only have stacking diminutives. This is summarized in (67):

(67) Predictions of rule (66):

- a. If a language shows evidence for $n_{16/17/18}$ and n_{LOC} , then it cannot have non-stacking diminutives.
- b. If a language has non-stacking diminutives, then it has either $n_{16/17/18}$ or n_{LOC} but not both.

In our limited sample, these predictions seem to be borne out. Of the languages that show evidence for a bipartite locative, Chaga-Rombo indeed has stacking diminutives, Makhuwa does not form derived diminutives, and Cuwabo forms diminutives via a compound with *mwáná*, derived from the word for ‘child’. As mentioned in 3.2, Kĩĩtharaka (which derives locatives by suffixing *-ini*) shows evidence for n_{LOC} but not for $n_{16/17/18}$ and hence the spell-out of n_{LOC} is not affected by the presence of (66). Indeed, Kĩĩtharaka has non-stacking diminutives, as seen in the comparison between (68) and (69).

Kĩĩtharaka

(68) Téne mûnó, n-gûkú na n-káánga ci-a-rî a-cooré
 long very 9-chicken and 9-guineafowl 10SM-PST-be 1-friend
 na ci-a-karág-á **kî-thakáa-ní.**
 and 10SM-PST-stay-FV 7-bush-LOC

‘Long ago chicken and guinea fowl were friends and were living in the bush.’

(69) M-bítí na ka-yúgú bá-á-kámat-a n-káánga î-rá bá-úrag-iré,
 9-hyena and 12-hare 2SM-PST-carry-FV 9-guinea.fowl 9-DEM.DIST 2SM-kill-PFV
 bá-a-thí n’yó bá-ntû **ka-thakáa-ní**
 2SM-PST-go and-9.PRO 16-somewhere 12-bush-LOC

‘Hyena and Hare carried the guinea fowl that they had killed, to some place in a small bush.’

One apparent counterexample is Swahili, which also derives locatives by suffixing *-ni* but shows evidence for $n_{16/17/18}$ too (see (70), repeated from above) and is described as having non-stacking diminutives, whether in class 7/8 or the colloquial 12/13, as illustrated in (71) and

²⁶ Or alternatively locatives do have two ns , the lower of which would never be visible, nor have any influence on the semantics... this would presumably be impossible to acquire.

(72).

Swahili (Carstens 1997: 402)

(70) Nyumba-ni pa-/ku-/m-na wa-tu w-engi.
 9.house-LOC 16-/17-/18-have 2-people 2-many
 ‘In/at the house are many people.’

(71) Standard Swahili (Kihore et al. 2001, via Gibson et al. 2017)

- a. m-toto ‘child’ (class 1)
- b. ki-toto ‘small child’ (class 7)
- c. wa-toto ‘children’ (class 2)
- d. vi-toto ‘small children’ (class 8)

(72) Colloquial Swahili (King’ei 2000: 86, via Gibson et al. 2017: 374)

- a. ka-toto ‘small child’ (class 12)
- b. tu-toto ‘small children’ (class 13)

However, a closer look reveals a more finegrained pattern, where crucially not all noun phrases behave alike – much like Rangi. The four Swahili native speakers we consulted all provided stacking diminutives and augmentatives for nouns in classes 3/4 and 9/10, and three out of four gave non-stacking diminutives and augmentatives for classes 1/2 (the fourth one had stacking throughout):

| noun class | basic | | diminutive | | |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 3/4 | m-kono mi-kono | hand(s) | ki/ka-m-kono vi/tu-mi-kono | small hand(s) | stack |
| 3/4 | m-chezo mi-chezo | game(s) | ki/ka-m-chezo vi/tu-mi-chezo | small game(s) | stack |
| 9/10 | n-doto | dream(s) | ki-/ka-n-doto vi/tu-n-doto | small dream(s) | stack |
| 1/2 | mw-oga wa-oga | coward(s) | ki/ka-oga vi/tu-oga | small coward(s) | replace |
| 1/2 | m-toto wa-toto | child(ren) | ki-toto vi-toto | small child(ren) | replace |

Table 6 – Diminutive derivations in Swahili

Importantly, the same split between classes 1/2 and the other classes was present in locatives: only the noun classes that form diminutives by stacking form locatives in *-ni*; classes 1/2 form periphrastic locatives using a preposition.

| noun class | basic | | locative | | |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3/4 | m-kono mi-kono | hand(s) | m-kono-ni mi-kono-ni | on/in the hand(s) | |
| 3/4 | m-chezo mi-chezo | game(s) | m-chezo-ni mi-chezo-ni | in the game(s) | |
| 9/10 | n-doto | dream(s) | n-doto-ni | in a dream | |
| 1/2 | mw-oga wa-oga | coward(s) | *mw-oga-ni *wa-oga-ni | at/on/near the coward(s) | kwa/karibu na mwoga |
| 1/2 | m-toto wa-toto | child(ren) | *m-toto-ni *wa-toto-ni | at/on/near the child(ren) | kwa/karibu na mtoto |

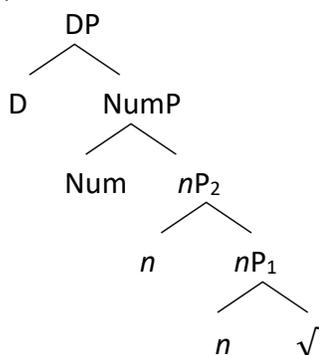
Table 7 – Locative derivations in Swahili

This follows from our proposal if, like in Rangi, the VI rules in Swahili for gender A (classes 1/2) do include a zero VI rule (responsible for the absence of the basic prefix in diminutive derivations and the impossibility of *-ni* in attempted locatives) whereas such a VI rule is not present for other noun classes (resulting in spell-out of the lower *n* in both diminutives and locatives).

5.2. One vs. two Number projections

An important difference between the proposed structures for diminutives (73) and locatives (74) is the presence of two NumPs in the locative nominal projection, versus only one NumP in the diminutive.²⁷ We argue that this structural difference holds explanatory power, in that it accounts for two differences between diminutives and locatives that hold across the Bantu languages.

(73) Structure of diminutive

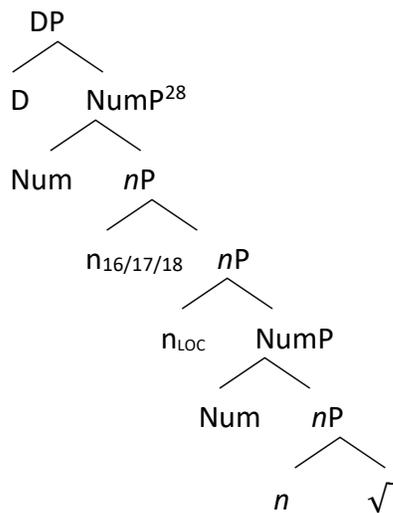


²⁷ Borrowing/code-switching is interesting in this respect: in Gikuyu (and surrounding languages), the diminutive prefix can be added to English words, as in i and ii. The plural takes the class 13 prefix as expected, but the English plural *-s* must also be present. This indicates that one language (English) must be closed off by NumP before the other language (Gikuyu) can be switched to. We leave this for further research.

Gikuyu (E51, Mary Karuri, p.c.)

- i. ka-monsta 'little monster'
- ii. tu-monstaz 'little monsters'

(74) Structure of locatives



The first difference has been mentioned above: whereas diminutives show variation in whether the diminutive prefix is stacking or non-stacking, as far as we know, derived prefixal locatives always take stacking prefixes, regardless of whether diminutives in a given language are stacking or non-stacking. The combination of non-stacking diminutives (75) and stacking locatives (76) is found in Fwe, for example. Note that Fwe only has prefixal locatives, thus being different from the suffixing languages in Section 5.1.

Fwe (Gunnink 2018: 125)

- (75) a. cì-pùrà 'chair' (7) b. n-jùò 'house' (9)
 kà-pùrà 'stool' (12) ka-jùò 'small house' (12)

(Gunnink 2018: 127)

- (76) a. mù-nzì 'village' (3)
 kù-mù-nzì 'at the village' (17-3)
- b. mú-twí 'head' (3)
 há-mù-twí 'on the head' (16-3)

The proposal we put forth is that this asymmetry can be attributed to the fact that *n* with a locative gender (be that n_{LOC} , or $n_{16/17/18}$ where n_{LOC} is absent) selects a NumP rather than an *nP*. Due to the presence of this NumP, the lower *n* will never be adjacent to the locative *n*. Therefore, even in a language in which diminutives are non-stacking and therefore have a general VI rule for *n* being spelled out as null when adjacent to another *n* (see (62) in Section

²⁸ We may wonder whether there is a high NumP present in locatives. Apart from reasons of general parsimony, the fact that derived locatives can be interpreted as plural (e.g., the tops of the tables) argues in favor of the presence of a high NumP.

4.2 above), in a locative, the lower *n* will never be in the conditioning environment that leads to the null spell-out of that *n*. The proposed structures thus correctly capture the fact that locatives are crosslinguistically always stacking.

The second property that varies between diminutives and locatives is what is referred to as *alternative concord*, wherein modifiers of locatives may exhibit concord with either the basic noun class (in the present analysis this corresponds to the gender feature on the innermost *n*) or the outer noun class (corresponding to the gender feature on the highest *n*). Alternative concord is often available for locatives²⁹ (77) but never for diminutives (78).

Karanga-Shona (Myers 1987:104, adapted)

- (77) a. pa-mu-shá apo p-ósé pa-káchéna
 16-3-home 16.DEM 16-all 16-white
 ‘at that whole white home’
- b. pa-mu-shá uyo p-ósé pa-káchéna
 16-3-home 3.DEM 16-all 16-white
 ‘at that whole white home’
- c. pa-mu-shá uyo w-ósé pa-káchéna
 16-3-home 3.DEM 3-all 16-white
 ‘at that whole white home’
- d. *pa-mu-shá apo w-ósé pa-káchéna
 16-3-home 16.DEM 3-all 16-white
 Intended: ‘at that whole white home’

Shona (own data)

- (78) a. mu-suma mu-refu
 3-tree 3-tall
 ‘tall suma tree’
- b. zi-mu-suma zi-refu
 21-3-tree 21-tall
 ‘tall big suma tree’
- c. *zi-mu-suma mu-refu
 21-3-tree 3-tall
 Intended: ‘tall big suma tree’

²⁹ The body of literature on alternative concord in Bantu languages shows more variation than we can do justice to here, as for instance variation in which types of modifiers can participate in alternative concord. For a recent overview, see Zeller (To appear).

- (82) a. *sá-∅-dunhu uyu*
 1a-5-district DEM.1
 ‘this district head’
- b. *sá-∅-dunhu iri*
 1a-5-district DEM.5
 ‘this head of this district’

(Myers 1987:105)

In this light, we repeat that in diminutives, both prefixes have the same value for number (as discussed in section 4.1), whereas for locatives, the location can be singular but the referent plural, thus requiring separate Number projections. This can be seen in (42) above, and is again illustrated in (83), where the place where the pot is put (namely on the cooking stones) is necessarily just one, but the cooking stones are three.

Rukiga (database Asimwe & Van der Wal)

- (83) *á-ha-ma-héga*
 AUG-16-6-cooking.stones
 ‘on the cooking stones’ (=‘on the fire’)

In summary, the proposal that diminutives feature one NumP whereas locatives feature two NumPs makes some interesting predictions, which are so far borne out.

6. Implications & conclusion

At the outset of this paper we laid out an empirical domain that consisted of several types of nominals common to Bantu languages: basic nouns, infinitives, diminutives/augmentatives, and locatives. We introduced a mechanism for locating grammatical gender on *n* in the Distributed Morphology framework; a consequence of this analytical choice is that grammatical gender is associated with derivational power in the system. While the infinitives served as a proof-of-concept for this approach, the goal of subsequent discussion was to further explore the range of morphosyntactic variation within locatives and diminutives and to draw comparisons across Bantu languages that motivate a unified analysis of the structure of noun phrases in the Bantu language family.

The comparative overview and analysis presented above demonstrate that unifying locatives, diminutives, and basic nouns as derived by *n* with certain (gender) features not only is possible but allows us to capture the intra- and inter-language morphosyntactic variation evident in denominal nouns in Bantu languages by reference to just three parameters – one strictly morphological and two structural – and their interactions:

Parameter A: Does $n_{16/17/18}$ take NumP or DP as its complement?

Parameter B: Do locatives involve n_{LOC} , $n_{16/17/18}$, or both?

Parameter C: Do the VI rules feature a rule dictating null spellout of the lower n in the presence of an adjacent n ?

Parameter C encodes a sensitivity – or lack thereof – to the presence of a higher adjacent n in the syntactic structure of the derived noun. In other words, the rule applies uniformly to the n s that surface as basic prefixes, diminutive prefixes, and locatives. Bantu languages that do not have the VI rule dictating null spellout of n in the environment of a higher adjacent n are expected to spell out basic prefixes in diminutives (hence what surfaces as stacking diminutives) and are expected to allow for the spellout of any n involved in the derivation of locatives. If the language does have the VI rule listed in Parameter C, then any n that is adjacent to a higher n will be spelled out as null. This leads to what on the surface appears to be “replacing” of basic prefixes with diminutive prefixes in the derivation of diminutives in languages like Fwe.

Locatives are also formed by a derivational n with gender features selecting a nominal projection, but we argue in Section 3.1 that the size of this complement (except for inherently locative nouns) is at least NumP and at most DP. In either case, the size of this projection ensures that n_{LOC} is not adjacent to the basic prefix, and therefore bleeds the environment for the VI rule in Parameter C that would spell out the basic prefix in such a structure as null. In other words, the fact that n_{LOC} selects for NumP (or DP) correctly accounts for the fact that locatives are consistently stacking, i.e. that the basic prefix is always overt, regardless of the presence or absence of the VI rule in Parameter C. Diminutives, on the other hand, lack the intervening NumP and thus vary according to this parameter. The stacking versus non-stacking nature is on the surface a morphological difference that is rooted in the interaction of a structural parameter and a morphological one. But the structural parameter also has syntactic reflexes. As we argue in Section 5.2, assuming that adjectives must attach at least at NumP, the structural difference between locatives and diminutives may explain the availability of alternative concord in the former but not the latter.

Finally, Parameter B concerns whether locatives in a given language are derived by a combination of a general n_{LOC} and a higher n with a specific locative gender feature (16/17/18), or by only a single n projection with locative features (Section 3.2). Languages that have a layered n structure create an environment in which the condition for the rule in Parameter C – if the language has that rule – is met. In these languages, the lower n (usually realized as $-(i)ni$) would never be spelled out, and in fact we argue in Section 3.2 that such a language would not be learnable. Therefore, we expect only stacking languages (those without the null spellout rule) to allow for the spellout of n_{LOC} as $-(i)ni$ in the presence of a (null or overt) higher $n_{16/17/18}$. Although the status of $-(i)ni$ as the only n spelled out as a suffix remains stipulative, analyzing it as an n (with a [loc] gender feature) makes the correct predictions regarding cross-Bantu patterns in locative morphology. These predictions were discussed and met in Section 5.2.

This brings us back to the power of unifying basic and derivational affixes as gender on n . Much of the work we build on (see Section 1.2) proposes either dedicated projections or null heads that merge with the nominal syntactic structure to derive the semantic and syntactic properties

of diminutives and locatives. We take a different approach, instead centralizing the derivational power in a set of elements of the same category. The proposal that basic prefixes, diminutive prefixes, locative prefixes, and the locative suffix are all of the same category allows us to generalize across the morphosyntactic interactions that we see and attribute them to a finite set of morphological and structural parameters concerning the adjacency of *ns*.

We hope to have shown that representing grammatical gender as a feature on *n*, realized as nominal affixes, allows us to conceptualize nouns in Bantu languages – including basic nouns, infinitives, diminutives/augmentatives, and locatives – within one system. As previously stated, we do not claim to provide an analysis that represents any single Bantu language. Instead, we propose this comparative approach to nominal morphosyntax as evidence of the explanatory power of locating gender features on *n*, and we offer the mechanisms proposed here as a toolbox for further study of individual languages or phenomena. Indeed, as Msaka (2019: 55) warns, referring to Amidu (1997: 15), “some important language-specific properties are sometimes glossed over in the interest of creating a coherent comparative picture”. Our proposal can and should be leveraged to provide analyses of individual languages, and it is our hope that future work in this vein will investigate the language-specific properties that have been glossed over here in pursuit of determining to what extent this framework can capture the details of microvariation in Bantu nominal structure.

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Symbols and abbreviations

Numbers refer to noun classes except when followed by *SG/PL*, in which case they indicate person. High tones are marked by an acute accent; low tones are unmarked.

| | | | |
|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|
| APPL | applicative | F | feminine |
| AUG | augment | FOC | focus |
| COP | copula | FV | final vowel |
| DEM | demonstrative | HAB | habitual |
| DIST | distal | IDEO | ideophone |
| DJ | disjoint verb form | IND | associative index |

| | | | |
|------|---------------|---------|-------------------|
| LOC | locative | PROG | progressive |
| M | masculine | PRS | present tense |
| N | neuter | PST | past tense |
| NEG | negation | REC.PST | recent past tense |
| OM | object marker | REL | relative |
| PASS | passive | SG | singular |
| PFV | perfective | SM | subject marker |
| PL | plural | STAT | stative |
| PRO | pronoun | | |

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