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## SHONA CLASS 5 REVISITED: A CASE AGAINST \*RI- AS CLASS 5 NOMINAL PREFIX

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### Abstract

*In a critical reappraisal of the treatment of Shona noun classes, I challenge the hypothesized form of class 5 nominal prefix, \*ri-, as it hardly ever appears as such in the language. A comprehensive view of class 5 merges class 21 into class 5 and suppresses the need for a 'prosthetic' element to account for monosyllabic stems. Class 5 nominal prefix then includes all allomorphic realizations of the nominal prefix, from i- or ri- in monosyllabic stems, to voicing and zero as well as zi- with vowel-commencing stems; augmentatives which exhibit voicing and zi-. The copulative construction, which calls for a prefixed i- in class 5, further suggests that i- is simply the longer form of this class nominal prefix, and provides grounds for positing i- as a cover form.*

\* Indicates Proto-forms.

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Dr Chimhundu and his colleagues in the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe kept doors of learning open to me, and Dr Chimhundu's concern for my work and his remarks on this article are duly appreciated.

Professor Fortune's MA seminar at the University of Zimbabwe in 1992, stimulated me to raise some of the issues dealt with here. His kind and detailed comments on an earlier version gave me the opportunity to amend some of its more obvious defects, as well as adjust my criticisms — my debt to him is great. Fortune's prominence in the domain of Shona studies makes him an obvious target for criticism. I would like to acknowledge his understanding attitude in this matter, which is further evidence of his keen dedication to improving our knowledge of the Shona language.

I also appreciate the enlightened and enthusiastic comments of Dr Jefferies, a lecturer in linguistics and an expert on Shona.

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I stress that I take full responsibility for all mistakes, shortcomings and inaccurate interpretations as may be encountered herein.

WHEREAS THE VARIOUS realizations of Shona class 5 nominal prefix have been adequately described, some of the most extensively used Shona grammars extend the concordial marker \**ri-* to cover the nominal prefix in this class as well, since this is the hypothesized original form although it hardly ever appears as such in the language. This view appears to follow Fortune's descriptions in his prominent *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*<sup>2</sup> and his *Shona Grammatical Constructions*,<sup>3</sup> which largely expose the influence of Doke.<sup>4</sup> Other works, such as Dale's *Shona Companion* and *Shona Mini Companion*<sup>5</sup> and various textbooks<sup>6</sup> appear to have drawn heavily on Fortune.

I suggest that Fortune's representation is misleading, and that class 5 nominal prefix would be more adequately symbolized as a cluster of allomorphic realizations or, as Carter calls it, 'a prefix scatter'<sup>7</sup> covering the whole range of class 5 occurrences. This leads to a reassessment of this class so as to include class 21, and to a re-examination of the copulative construction. The copulative construction neatly falls in with the comparative hypothesis which suggests that *i-* is one among several allomorphs. In considering this hypothesis, classes 9 and 10, which show related phenomena, will also be briefly discussed.

## 1 PRELIMINARIES: THE CLASS SYSTEM

I assume, in the following, that the reader is familiar with the basic features of Bantu languages and the main trends in the descriptions of Shona to date.

In line with Doke's and Fortune's views, the various forms of Shona class markers required by grammatical elements in agreement are differentiated to the extent that each form showing the slightest hint of specificity is accorded a category of its own. More than seven forms have therefore been established, each matching a different category namely: noun, adjective, enumerative, quantitative, selectors, demonstrative and pronoun markers.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> G. Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona* (London, Longman, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> G. Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1 (Harare, Mercury Press, 3rd edn., 1985) and *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 2 (Harare, Mercury Press, 3rd edn., 1984).

<sup>4</sup> C. Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics* (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, 1931).

<sup>5</sup> D. Dale, *Shona Companion: A Practical Guide to Zimbabwe's Most Widely Spoken Language* (Gweru, Mambo Press and Literature Bureau, 2nd edn., 1972) and *Shona Mini Companion: A Guide for Beginners* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> 'O' level *Shona Grammar* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1970 and 1981).

<sup>7</sup> H. Carter, 'Introduction', in H. W. Chitepo, *Soko Risina Musoro* (London and Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1958), 1-14.

<sup>8</sup> Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 29-31, 116 and 121.

This mode of organizing data, although very accurate and leaving little if anything unmentioned, fails to capture the inherent identity and unity of concordial agreements which Shona, in common with other Bantu languages, very evidently displays. This is the result of an over-emphasis on minor phonetic differences, often reducible to largely predictable adaptations, depending on whether the concords cling to a vowel or a consonant, as well as to dialectal and individual variations.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, if provision is made for nominal prefixes in classes 9, 10 and 21, Shona class markers readily fall into two sets of forms:

- i) a nominal set (termed 'nominal prefixes'), pertaining to nouns and adjectives, having only one allomorph specific to a few nouns; and
- ii) an agreement or concordial set (referred to as 'class concord'), for all other items, with the exception of class 1 which resorts to a range of different markers dependent on specific grammatical units.<sup>10</sup>

Table I provides the basic forms of the two sets of class markers in the Zezuru variety of Shona, with consonant-commencing stems.<sup>11</sup>

The class 5 nominal slot is left purposely empty, and will be dealt with in due course. Class 9 and class 10 nominal prefixes, grouped here on the basis of their intrinsic similarity, are given as a scatter of realizations:

- i) nouns only: class 10:  
*dzi-* as a vestige for the pair of over-repeated instances, namely *imba/dzimba*, 'house'/'houses', (*ruimbo*)/*dzimbo*, 'song'/'songs', as well as the few occasional cases of secondary use.<sup>12</sup>
- ii) nouns and adjectives: class 9 and class 10:  
N- for nasalization, which is discussed later.

<sup>9</sup> Another explanation may be traced to the comparative perspective favoured in these accounts whereby any category identified in one southern Bantu language is thought to support the itemization of corresponding elements in related languages, with little regard for the specificity of each case.

<sup>10</sup> This is in line with Guthrie's classical distinction between two main categories, verbals and nominals. Nominals are further grouped into nouns, labelled 'independent nominals' and adjectives, labelled 'dependent nominals'. See M. Guthrie, *Common Bantu* (London, Oxford University Press, 4 vols., 1967), iv, 221-8, and I, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> I follow standard Shona spelling, as in use in 1992.

<sup>12</sup> Fortune's description of the nasal in the two nouns as an instance of the class 9 prefix does not seem valid as against its being lexical (*Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 66). In the case of *dzimbo*, the lexical view is supported by related words such as *ruimbo* 'song', and *imba*, 'to sing'. The interpretation of *imba/dzimbo* follows by analogy — although there is no apparently related stem in Shona to substantiate this claim.

Therefore, Fortune's derived core form of class 10 nominal prefix, formed by the addition of class 10 prefix |*dzi-*| or |*0-*| to the class 9 prefix |*N-*|, seems over-complicated. The positing of |*dzi-*| is based only on the two nouns above; all other instances where |*dzi-*| does not surface are analyzed as |*0-*|. This analysis serves as an example of conclusions being drawn from languages other than the one under scrutiny.

*o-* which, according to Mkanganwi<sup>13</sup> and Ngunga<sup>14</sup> is used for words, mostly borrowed nouns, where there is no change at all.

*i-* for monosyllabic stems, as will be suggested in the course of this article.

Table 1

## CLASS MARKERS WITH CONSONANT-COMMENCING STEMS IN ZEZURU

Class	Nominal Prefix <sup>†</sup>	Concords: Verb, -no- tense
1	<i>mu-</i>	<i>a- / -mu- / u*</i>
2	<i>va-</i>	<i>va-</i>
3	<i>mu-</i>	<i>u-</i>
4	<i>mi-</i>	<i>i-</i>
5		<i>ri-</i>
6	<i>ma-</i>	<i>a-</i>
7	<i>chi-</i>	<i>chi-</i>
8	<i>zvi-</i>	<i>zvi-</i>
9	<i>N-; 0; i-</i>	<i>i-</i>
10	<i>N-; 0; i; (dzi)</i>	<i>dzi-</i>
11	<i>ru-</i>	<i>ru-</i>
12	<i>ka-</i>	<i>ka-</i>
13	<i>tu-</i>	<i>tu-</i>
14	<i>hu-; u<sup>‡</sup></i>	<i>u-</i>
15	<i>ku-</i>	<i>ku-</i>
16	<i>pa-</i>	<i>pa-</i>
17	<i>ku-</i>	<i>ku-</i>
18	<i>mu-</i>	<i>mu-</i>
21	<i>zi-</i>	<i>ri-</i>

<sup>1</sup> Class 19 (*sui-*), almost entirely restricted to the Mhari dialect of Karanga,<sup>15</sup> and class 20, which goes unregistered in most accounts of Shona noun classes, are disregarded here.

\* *a-* for subject prefix, *-mu-* for object infix, and *u-* for the remnant (in some dialects, *u-* is used in relative forms).

<sup>†</sup> In Zezuru, class 14 nominal prefix *u-* is restricted to disyllabic stems.

Some linguists have claimed an even greater degree of unity between those two sets on the grounds that:

<sup>13</sup> K. G. Mkanganwi, 'An outline of the morphology of substantives in Ndaui with a preliminary note on Ndaui phonology' (London, University of London, M.Phil thesis, 1973).

<sup>14</sup> A. Ngunga, 'A comparative study of Shona and Yao noun classes' (Harare, University of Zimbabwe, BA dissertation, 1987), 34.

<sup>15</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 103.

- i) not all classes show differences; if we consider class 9 and class 10 main allomorphs (class 5 still excluded), only 6 classes, namely 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 10, out of the 18 presented here show any differences,
- ii) all classes whose nominal prefix and class concord differ are endowed with a nasal in their nominal prefix and,
- iii) with the exception of locative class 18 where the nasal is retained throughout, the concordial set appears to be the nominal one minus the nasal.<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, these linguists posit Bantu languages as having one single set of class markers: viz. nominal ones, to which phonological rules are applied in certain instances, leading to the loss of the nasal in the concordial set, locative class 18 being disregarded altogether.<sup>17</sup>

Notwithstanding the likelihood of this analysis in a diachronic perspective, Heny, within a generative framework, has dispensed with its supposed explanatory power as far as present-day Shona is concerned, since it would necessitate framing two rather *ad hoc* phonological rules, accounting for the non-syllabic allomorphs of classes 5, 9 and 10. Stating that 'none of them [operate] synchronically beyond this particular phenomenon', Heny convincingly argues the case for positing two different, albeit related, sets of markers which he terms the 'two-prefix solution', on the grounds of the syntactic and semantic specificity of nouns and adjectives. He classically analyses adjectives as a sub-class of nouns, as opposed to concords.<sup>18</sup>

I will, likewise, avoid the extreme position of accepting a single set of class markers, and retain two different series, related, but not to the extent that the relationship can easily be subsumed into a single series of phonologically linked forms.

<sup>16</sup> The odd behaviour of class 18 may tentatively be linked to the specificity of locative classes which operate, in most cases, at phrase level (A. Jefferies, personal communication).

<sup>17</sup> Fortune's statement that 'the affixes should be regarded... as being the same morpheme as the noun prefix' is probably based on this rationale, although he does not elaborate. Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 15.

<sup>18</sup> F. Heny, 'Bantu lexical classes and semantic universals' (with some remarks on how not to write phonological rules), *Studies in African Linguistics*, (1972), iii, 222 and 231. Heny allocates the nominal prefix to 'deep structure', whereas class concords spread from the noun onto other agreeing elements (p., 256). Heny's paper has fuelled a stimulating controversy, in which Givon (T. Givon, 'On cost accounting in lexical structure: A reply to Frank Heny', *Studies in African Linguistics* (1972), iii, 427-31) contests the grouping of nouns and adjectives simply on the basis of concords when other criteria obviously separate them. Bennet (P. R. Bennet, 'Heny vs. Givon: Pardon, may I cut in?', *Studies in African Linguistics* (1973), iv, 219-22) serves as a reminder that the setting of grammatical categories should arise from syntactic and semantic behaviour and not from incidental morphological features. However, as this article deals only with morphological issues, Bennet's argument can be disregarded.

## 2 TRADITIONAL VIEW OF CLASS 5 NOMINAL PREFIX: \*RI-

For the sake of providing grammatical outlines, it is deemed convenient to ensure a representation of each and every class marker suitable as an entry to a table. In the case of Shona class 5 nominal prefix, following Fortune's influential analysis, this practice has resulted in resorting to a form identical to the class concord; that is, \**ri-*, in spite of the obvious discrepancy between the realizations and the chosen symbol.<sup>19</sup>

Fortune's argument is explicit in *An Analytical Grammar of Shona* when he states:

The prefix of class 5 never appears as such in the form *ri-* but its original presence in this form can be deduced from the forms of this prefix in other languages, Nguni, Tsonga and Sotho, from the forms taken by the concords of this class, e.g. the enumerative concord, and from the nature of the sounds which have resulted from the fusion of this prefix with the initial phones of the stem.<sup>20</sup>

In his more recent *Shona Grammatical Constructions* Fortune pursues the same line of argument, although he dismisses the use of comparative evidence, construing \**ri-*, 'because this is suggested by the prefixes of other substantives of class 5, viz. by other forms of the class affix'.<sup>21</sup> Examples he then cites include *-mwe*, the enumerative, and *-no*, the close proximity selector.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that Fortune, as is the case with Doke,<sup>23</sup> assumes the enumerative stands for any element exhibiting *ri-* as its class 5 concord, and that 'the reference to the enumerative concord has no nominal overtone'.<sup>24</sup>

The similarity of the two series of class markers has already been dismissed. I feel, however, that since the arguments postulated have fostered the widespread misconception of \**ri-* as the class 5 nominal prefix echoed in the well-known rhyme which strings together nominal prefixes, running *mu-/va-*, *mu-/mi-*, *ri-/ma-*, *chi-/zvi-*, and so on, these arguments, popular and likely though they may be, especially in relation to the enumerative stems, need to be re-examined.

<sup>19</sup> Hazel Carter makes no attempt to construe a single symbol for this prefix, simply stating that it has disappeared, whereas the change in stem-initial betrays its existence (H. Carter and G. P. Kahari, *Shona Language Course* (London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1972), 7. Other scholars posit zero — Mkwanganwi, 'An outline of the morphology of substantives . . .', 113-14; and Ngunga, 'A comparative study of Shona and Yao noun classes', 23.

<sup>20</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 53.

<sup>21</sup> Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 32 and 50.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>23</sup> Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Fortune, personal communication.

## 2.1 Internal evidence: The enumerative

Let us examine Fortune's evidence in support of \**ri-* as the class 5 nominal prefix viz; the behaviour of 'enumerative' stems.

Fortune identifies three so-called 'enumerative stems', *-mwé*, 'same', *-mwe*, 'other', 'a certain', 'some', *-i* ? 'of what sort?'<sup>25</sup> As *-i* seems to be so little used in present-day Harare speech as to prescribe any clear elaboration,<sup>26</sup> we shall contemplate only the two segmentally identical, monosyllabic stems *-mwé* and *-mwe*, which can be treated together since their concords are alike in all cases.

These concords, as listed in Fortune's *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*,<sup>27</sup> offer an alternative for all classes the nominal prefix of which contains a nasal consonant: 'there are two types of concords, "strong" (containing a nasal consonant), and "weak", (not containing a nasal consonant)'.<sup>28</sup> The distribution of these forms follows dialectal (and probably also idiolectal) lines. The 'strong' series corresponds with the nominal prefix, and the 'weak' series with the class concord. Hence, if we disregard class 5 and class 10, this alternative amounts to a choice between the two main series of markers, and these stems can be said to behave either nominally or concordially, as shown by Table II below.<sup>29</sup>

This leaves out class 5 which, even for those dialects which require the nominal or 'strong' forms, consistently displays the concordial series. The same applies, to a lesser extent, to class 9 and class 10, further complicating the issue.

If we relate the enumerative markers to the two basic sets, the 'unexpected' presence of the class 5 concord in place of the nominal prefix could be explained as an extension of the concordial agreement when, for phonological reasons, the nominal prefix fails to operate. The form which would have resulted from implementing the feature exhibited by monosyllabic stems in class 5, which might be hypothesized as \**imwe*, with 'epenthetic' [i] (discussed in greater detail later), is not documented. Furthermore, since the nature of the initial consonant of the stem precludes

<sup>25</sup> Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 111.

<sup>26</sup> The only consistent context I was able to elicit is in enquiring the sex of a person, especially a new-born baby: *mwana muyi?* 'which (sort of) child?' In all other instances, either the interrogative *-pi* or the encliticization of *-i*, was preferred.

<sup>27</sup> In his *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1 only the 'strong' forms are given.

<sup>28</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 165-6. Note that class 18 stands out again and belies this suggested trend as it maintains the nasal even in the class concord.

<sup>29</sup> This view may be supported by the very controversial concord in *zi*, suggested here as an alternative to *ri-* in so-called class 21. Out of a brief survey of about ten people from different areas, *zimwe* would be reluctantly tolerated by only two, while one would cite it as revealing a non-native speaker.



voicing, dialects using the nominal or 'strong' set for those items would have had to resort to use of the concordial or 'weak' set to ensure a proper and overt mark in that class, either as a result of internal analogy or through influence from neighbouring varieties.

Table II

CHART SHOWING *-MWE* CONCORDS IN ZEZURU, KARANGA AND MANYIKA

Class	Nominal Prefix	Class Concord	Class	Nominal Prefix	Class Concord
	'strong forms'	'weak forms'		'strong forms'	'weak forms'
	Zezuru &	Manyika		Zezuru &	Manyika <sup>30</sup>
	Karanga			Karanga	
1	<i>mumwe</i>	<i>umwe</i>	11	<i>rumwe</i>	<i>rumwe</i>
2	<i>vamwe</i>	<i>vamwe</i>	12	<i>tumwe</i>	<i>tumwe</i>
3	<i>mumwe</i>	<i>umwe</i>	13	<i>kamwe</i>	<i>kamwe</i>
4	<i>mimwe</i>	<i>imwe</i>	14	<i>humwe</i>	<i>umwe</i>
5	<i>rimwe</i>	<i>rimwe</i>	15	<i>kumwe</i>	<i>kumwe</i>
6	<i>mamwe</i>	<i>amwe</i>	16	<i>pamwe</i>	<i>pamwe</i>
7	<i>chimwe</i>	<i>chimwe</i>	17	<i>kumwe</i>	<i>kumwe</i>
8	<i>zvimwe</i>	<i>zvimwe</i>	18	<i>mumwe</i>	<i>mumwe</i>
9	<i>imwe</i>	<i>imwe</i>	21	<i>rimwe</i>	<i>rimwe</i>
10	<i>dzimwe</i>	<i>dzimwe</i>		( <i>zimwe</i> )	

For class 9 and class 10 the case is more straightforward since: i) the behaviour of the stem in class 9 is no different from that of monosyllabic stems, and ii) the class 10 form may be assimilated to the few instances where a prefix *dzi-* appears in nouns. These forms can therefore be considered as instances of nominal agreements.

The two enumerative stems would then conclusively exhibit either nominal or concordial agreement, phonology permitting.

From this evidence, should *ri-*, *i-* and *dzi-* be considered genuine nominal prefixes for classes 5, 9 and 10, they could only be posited as alternative forms of the nominal prefixes. This does not, however, provide any grounds for the theory that they are anything other than lexically distributed allomorphs.

<sup>30</sup> This division, based on Doke's pioneer survey, should not be taken as clear-cut: it is kept more for reasons of convenience than accuracy. A certain amount of overlap has been pointed out. For instance, not all Manyika-dialect speakers use the 'weak' forms, Mahungwe speakers, located on the border with Zezuru-speaking areas, have the 'strong' ones, and so on.

## 2.2 External evidence: Comparison with Bantu languages

Even though the comparatist argument was not maintained by Fortune, it may be useful to bear in mind that data taken from related languages should not be decisive in framing the grammar of a specific language. Therefore, neither the similarity between class 5 nominal prefix and class concord exhibited, to some extent, by other Southern Bantu languages, nor the forms of the nominal prefix in those languages, give any dependable grounds for making assumptions about Shona if clear examples are not found in that language itself.

Moreover, major comparative works on Bantu languages posit two different reconstructions for class 5 inflected elements: the nominal and the concordial. Guthrie construes class 5 nominal prefix as \*yi or yj, class 5 concord as \*di or dj, and Meeussen as \*i and \*di respectively.<sup>31</sup>

Having strengthened our argument for positing the two series of markers, we can now address the specific issue of class 5 nominal prefix.

### 3

#### CLASS 5 IN PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT

A review of Shona class 5 nominal prefix allomorphs is needed in order to assess whether or not the commonly accepted representation is accurate.

Class 5 nominal prefix is usually described as consisting of two allomorphic realizations of the hypothesized cover-form \*ri-, according to whether the stem is consonant- or vowel-commencing: voicing and zi- respectively.<sup>32</sup> Augmentatives with prefix zi-, in spite of commanding class 5 concord, are set aside in a specific class numbered 21.

The extensive view of class 5 nominal prefix that I advocate here includes augmentatives, which use the very same prefix allomorphs, but in a broader context, as well as the device required by monosyllabic stems, i- (rarely ri-). I shall review them all and consider what 'cover form' they suggest for the nominal prefix.

In line with Fortune, I differentiate prefixes in primary function, which are normal, from those in secondary function, which are occasional, opposing reference meaning to a connotative based on it.<sup>33</sup>

Within class 5 primary usage we need to establish a distinction based on stem-length, separating monosyllabic stems from disyllabic ones.

<sup>31</sup> Guthrie, *Common Bantu*, Vol. IV, 221-8; and A. E. Meeussen, 'Bantu grammatical reconstructions', in J. Doneux *et al.* (eds.), *Africana Linguistica* (1967), III, 97.

<sup>32</sup> No explanation whatsoever is offered for derivation of zi- from \*ri- which seems an unlikely phonetic result. Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 54.

Whereas voicing has been extensively described, little emphasis seems to have been devoted so far to other class 5 nominal prefix allomorphs, such as *i-* for monosyllabic stems, and *zi-* for vowel-commencing ones.

### 3.1 Monosyllabic stems: *i-* (*0-*, *ri-*) as a nominal prefix

Most Shona dialects do not admit monosyllabic words, Karanga being one exception.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, when in isolation, otherwise monosyllabic class 5 nouns are supplemented with an initial vowel *li*, allowing them to be uttered. This vowel is said to embody the 'stabilizer', another instance of which is found in monosyllabic imperatives:

*idya!*, 'eat!' < *-dya*, 'to eat', but *tora!* 'take!', < *-tora*, 'to take'.<sup>35</sup>

In nominal phrases, this stabilizer becomes redundant, and can be discarded, as will be shown below.

*i-* has been considered as a separate element termed 'penultimate'<sup>36</sup> or 'prosthetic'<sup>37</sup> whereas Stevick more aptly refers to it as a 'dummy prefix for nouns lacking prefix'.<sup>38</sup>

I contend that *i-* is yet another realization of a class 5 nominal prefix, and that creating a special one-element category to accommodate it is pointless. Instead, we have an instance of a nominal prefix functioning as a stabilizer. To substantiate my claim, the absence of *i-* in certain phrases must be addressed, as this behaviour is atypical of a true prefix in Shona and would explain the reluctance of grammarians to assimilate it to a prefix.

I will examine the conditioning of this vowel in both words in isolation, and in phrases.

#### 3.1.1 Words in isolation

The *i-* vowel, present with monosyllabic class 5 stems, is deleted in the plural class 6 marked by prefix *ma-*.

<i>izwi</i> , 'word'	<i>mazwi</i>	<i>ibwe</i> , 'stone'	<i>mabwe</i>
<i>ibvi</i> , 'knee'	<i>mabvi</i>	<i>ivhu</i> , 'soil'	<i>mavhu</i>

A similar phenomenon occurs in class 9 and class 10<sup>39</sup> which show no difference in their nominal prefix:

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 74 and Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 50.

<sup>35</sup> < implies derivation from the form to the right of it.

<sup>36</sup> Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, 125 and Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 50.

<sup>37</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 74.

<sup>38</sup> E. W. Stevick and K. Machiwa, *Manyika Step-by-Step* (Cleveland, Transvaal, The Central Mission Press, 1960), 107.

<sup>39</sup> I include class 9 and class 10 as this gender presents the same situation as that of class 5. In order for it to be valid, any explanation that dispenses with having an *ad hoc* element for class 5 *i-* should also accommodate classes 9 and 10.



3.1.2.1 Nominal phrases with influence of latent vowel: *-a, na*

When preceded by [a] ending elements, such as the 'associative' *-a* (a construction equated to the possessive) or *na*, meaning 'and', 'with', or 'by', nouns entail the coalescence of this vowel [a] with the latent vowel, which is characteristic of each noun class, the quality of which may be deduced from the output.

With syllabic prefixes, the latent vowel is in harmony with the vowel of the nominal prefix, resulting accordingly in either one of the following vowels [a, o, e]:<sup>45</sup>

*basa ravana*, 'the work of the children': class 2 latent vowel [a]:  
|*ra+a+va*...|

*nomukadzi*, 'with the woman': class 1 latent vowel [u]: |*na+u+mu*...|

*pamberi pomugwagwa*, 'further down the street': class 3 latent vowel [u]: |*pa+u+mu*...|

*mukati mechidzidzo*, 'in the midst of the lesson': class 7 latent vowel [i]: |*ma+i+chi*...|

*ane zvitoto*, 'he has shops': class 8 latent vowel [i]: |*na+i+zvi*...|.

The quality of classes 5, 9 and 10 latent vowel is [i], as can be inferred from the instances where [e] surfaces:<sup>46</sup>

*ane basa*, class 5 'he has work'; *nguva dzehondo*, class 9 'the times of the war'; *nehama dzake*, class 10 'with his relatives'.

Monosyllabic stems in the above phrases behave in a similar manner while allowing for the deletion of the prefix, as signalled by Mkanganwi for Ndau<sup>47</sup> — note that this variation seems devoid of meaning:

class 5: *neibwe/nebwe*, 'with the stone'; *mwana weivhu/wevhu*, 'son of the soil';

class 9: *neimba/nemba*, 'and the house'; *musoro weimbwa/wembwa*, 'the head of the dog'; *mukati meimba/memba*, 'inside the house';

class 10 *ane inda/nda dzakawanda*, 'he has many lice'.

We turn now to phrases where this vowel does not occur.

<sup>45</sup> Classical Zezuru offers a wide and systematic range of variation: [a+a] > [a], [a+u] > [o], [a+i] > [e]. Some dialects have neutralized this variation resulting in either [e] or [o] for all except proper nouns. I purposely observe the broader scope of realizations.

<sup>46</sup> *ii* is not suggested as being the form of the nominal prefix: the data merely prove that the nominal prefix vowel is of the same quality as the latent vowel.

<sup>47</sup> Mkanganwi, 'An outline of the morphology of substantives . . .', 100.

### 3.1.2.2 Nominal phrases with no influence of latent vowel: locative construction

In locative construction, the latent vowel does not arise and the vowel of the formative surfaces as it is ([a], [u]):

*pamugwagwa*, 'on the road'; *pachikoro*, 'in the school';  
*mumugwagwa*, 'on the road'; *kuchikoro*, 'towards the school'.

Here again, monosyllabic stems maintain alternative forms, according to the presence or absence of the vowel which I claim is prefixal:

*paibvi/pabvi*, 'on the knee'; *muibvi/mubvi*, 'in the knee';  
*paiuhu/pavhu*, 'on the soil'; *muivhu/muvhu*, 'in the soil';  
*paimba/pamba*, 'at the house'; *muimba/mumba*, 'inside the house'.

Coalescence between the vowel of the formative and that of the nominal prefix seems impermissible within the language (\**pebvi*, \**pemba*, and so on).

Within our hypothesis of *i*- as an allomorph of classes 5, 9 and 10 we would account for alternative forms by including an optional phonological rule which permits deletion of this V-shaped allomorph after a vowel:

CV-iC... > CV-iC... or CV-C...

The rule would simply state that the *lii* allomorph of class 5 and class 9 nominal prefixes may be omitted in monosyllabic stems in phrases after a vowel. Since *lii* would be the only vocalic nominal prefix, the rule could be generalized and restated as optional deletion of the nominal prefix vocalic allomorph of monosyllabic stems in phrases.

This optional phonological rule, sensitive to lexical category, seems plausible if one remembers that [i] is a weak vowel which is deleted in many contexts. Concord markers of Ct- shape, which become C- with vowel-commencing items, viz. subject markers before |*a*-| (past) or |*o*-| (exclusive), or the common realization of *masikati*, [*maskati*], 'good afternoon'/'afternoon', are but a few examples of this deletion.

An even greater degree of generalization encompassing both situations might then make provision for the deletion, optional or compulsory, of [i] belonging to a class marker in a vocalic sequence.

In traditional descriptions, short forms (monosyllabic words) were seen as basic, and what appeared to be the supplementation of a vowel to these short forms had to be explained along these lines — hence the need to resort to penultimate or prosthetic features.<sup>48</sup> Conversely, positing the

<sup>48</sup> This view is supported by other examples in the language.

longer forms as basic, we need not cite specific elements for monosyllabic stems but only consider cases for deletion of elements; a process which seems at least as natural as supplementation. Consequently, this view obviates the need for specific items catering for monosyllabic stems, and enables a more general treatment of noun stems.

Assuming we now agree to consider *i*-surfacing in monosyllabic stems as a nominal prefix allomorph of classes 5, 9 and 10 rather than as a separate element, I will now turn my attention to class 5 disyllabic stems.

### 3.2 Disyllabic stems

In disyllabic stems, class 5 nominal prefix is divided according to the phonetic nature of the stem-initial, which can be a vowel or a consonant.

#### 3.2.1 Vowel-commencing stems: *z(i)*-

The classification of *z(i)*- as a class 5 nominal prefix allomorph with vowel-commencing stems is well-established. Fortune, for example, mentions it as one realization of *ri*-, listing a handful of vowel-commencing stems where the status of *zi*- as a prefix (and not the stem-initial) proves against plural (class 6) or other related forms.<sup>49</sup>

class 5 (singular)	class 6 (plural)
<i>zano</i> , 'plan'	<i>mano</i> or <i>mazano</i>
<i>ziso</i> , 'eye'	<i>meso</i> or <i>maziso</i>
<i>zino</i> , 'tooth'	<i>meno</i> or <i>mazino</i>

<i>zuro</i> , class 5 'yesterday'	<i>mauro</i> , class 6 'evening'
<i>zero</i> , class 5 'age'	<i>muero</i> , <i>mwero</i> , class 3 'amount'
<i>zambuko</i> , 'ford'	<i>-yambuka</i> , 'to ford'

The alternative plural formation which retains *zi*-, and is the form most frequently used in urban Shona, provides a fair indication that this allomorph is probably in the process of losing its grammatical (prefixal) value and amalgamating within a restructured stem. This view is confirmed by the copulative construction as well as CV- prefix allomorphs in monosyllabic stems: examples of the latter have already been supplied for class 5.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 73 and *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 50.

<sup>50</sup> See footnote 43.

### 3.2.2 Consonant-commencing stems: *The voicing process*

Most nominals when entered in classes 5, 9 and 10 exhibit a change in their initial consonant. Resulting from Doke's pioneer study, the class 5 alteration is known as 'vocalization', over which Fortune's term 'voicing' is now often preferred. Classes 9 and 10 can be subsumed under 'nasalization', referring to the basic form of the class prefix, even though a nasal is not necessarily present in all cases.<sup>51</sup>

Voicing of the initial also does not appear to be a necessary condition for inserting nominals in class 5, as nominals may register in that class bearing no overt mark, as will be illustrated below.

The behaviour of the stem-initial is all the more obvious with words whose initials appear in different contexts, a definition which is ideally suited to adjectives by nature and, to a lesser extent, nouns belonging to gender 5 and 6, 10 and 11, or de-verbals. The canonical shape of the stem-initial in cases of change can, therefore, best be captured in an intervocalic context. I shall review all consonants of the language, dividing them according to their behaviour when functioning as stem-initials to class 5 nouns.

#### 3.2.2.1 Initials exemplifying changes

The main regular changes involving class 5 are given and exemplified in Table III below.<sup>52</sup> I have supplied the corresponding class 9 and class 10 forms for comparison (this gender modifies a number of other consonants which we will disregard, as they are not the subject of this discussion). The changes are fairly widespread, although one has to take cognizance of dialectal and lexical variations.

<sup>51</sup> Pongweni, among others, offers a study of the changes experienced by class 9 and class 10 de-verbal nouns and their phonetic representation in his *Studies in Shona Phonetics: An Analytical Review* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1990), 44-53.

<sup>52</sup> This presentation is heavily indebted to Doke's and Fortune's thorough accounts, where more examples can be found (Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, 125-31 and Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 72-9). Many authors have since attempted to draw a more synthesized and systematized view of the phonological processes involved. I acknowledge their endeavours but maintain a less elaborate description in this article.



Table III

TABLE OF CHANGES UNDERGONE BY INITIAL CONSONANTS

<i>Inter-vocalic</i>	<i>Voicing</i>	<i>Nasalization</i>
<i>Classes 6, 2, etc.</i>	<i>Class 5</i>	<i>Classes 9 and 10</i>
p	b	mh
t	d	nh
k	g	h
ch	j	ch
tsv	dzv	tsv
sv	dzv/sv <sup>53</sup>	sv
(pf)	bv	(pf) <sup>54</sup>

Adjectives whose stem-initial appears in the three contexts specified in Table III, provide sufficient data to exemplify all cases.<sup>55</sup>

-*pamhi*, 'large': class 3 *muti mupamhi*, 'a large tree'; class 5: *gumbo bamhi*, 'a large leg'; class 9 *tafura mhamhi*, 'a large table';

-*tete*, 'thin': class 1 *munhu mutete*, 'a thin person'; class 5 *bepa dete*, 'a thin (piece of) paper'; class 9 *nyama nhete*, 'a thin (piece of) meat';

-*kuru*, 'big': class 1 *munhu mukuru*, 'a big person'; class 5 *bere guru*, 'a big hyena'; class 9 *shiri huru*, 'a big bird';

-*chena*, 'white': class 4 *miti michena*, 'white trees'; class 5 *bere jena*, 'a white hyena'; class 9 *shiri chena*, 'a white bird';

-*tsvuku*, 'red': class 3 *muti mutsvuku*, 'a red tree'; class 5 *banga dzvuku*, 'a red knife'; class 9 *tafura tsvuku*, 'a red table';

-*svinu*, 'healthy', 'attractive': class 1 *musikana musvinu*, 'an attractive girl'; class 5 *bere dzvinu/svinu*, 'a healthy hyena'; class 10 *nzou svinu*, 'healthy elephants';

-*pfumbu*, 'grey': class 7 *chigaro chipfumbu*, 'a grey chair'; class 5 *bere bvumbu*, 'a grey hyena'; class 9 *tafura pfumbu*, 'a grey table'.

### 3.2.2.2 Non-affected initials

As previously stated, some words are not affected by the voicing process: their stem-initial includes not only voiced consonants, which by definition cannot undergo further voicing, but others as well. Moreover, some words,

<sup>53</sup> Optional change in class 5 for some words.

<sup>54</sup> This series is poorly illustrated: Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, 129, gives only one example, *-pfumbu*, while Fortune suggests another, *boupa/maphupa*, 'bone' in *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 73.

<sup>55</sup> See Dale's table of adjectives in *Shona Companion*, 30-31.

mostly borrowed, display in class 5 in initial position a consonant pertaining to the voiceless set, thereby contravening the hypothesized conditioning.

a 'Unvoiceable' initials: Voicing is understandably excluded with voiced initials phonically identical to the items of the voiced set, to which may be added the plosives [bh] and [dh], and miscellaneous other features such as nasals, rolled consonants, and semi-vowels.

Adjectival stems again provide the most conspicuous illustration of 'unvoiceable' initials; other instances include nouns in classes 5 and 6.

a (i) Voiced initials: Include:

- items identical to those of the voiced set: [d, b, g, j, dzv, bv] and [bh, dh]. Examples:

-*diki*, 'small': class 1 *munhu mudiki*, 'a small person'; class 5 *bere diki*, 'a small hyena'; class 9 *nzou diki*, 'a small elephant';  
*basa/mabasa*, 'work'; *gumbeze/magumbeze*, 'blanket';  
*jasi/majasi*, 'coat'; *dzviti/madzviti*, 'Ndebele person';  
*bvute/mabvute*, 'shade'; *bhuku/mabhuku*, 'book';  
*dhorobha/madhrobha*, 'town'.

- other voiced consonants: [v, vh, z, zv, zh, h, dz], some examples of which are:

*vanga/mavanga*, 'scar'; *vhere/mavhere*, 'pubic hair'; *zizi/mazizi*, 'owl'; *zvere/mazvere*, 'maize plant';  
*-zhinji*, 'much', 'many': class 2 *vanhu vazhinji*, 'many people';  
class 5 *basa zhinji*, 'a lot of work'; class 9 *mari zhinji*, 'much money';  
*-hombe*, 'big': class 1 *musikana muhombe*, 'a big girl';  
class 5 *banga hombe*, 'a big knife'; class 10 *nzou hombe*, 'big elephants'; *dziva/madziva*, 'pool'.

a (ii) Miscellaneous consonants:

- nasals [n, nh, m, ny, mb]. Examples include:

*nwiwa/manwiwa*, 'water-melon'; *nhanga/manhanga*, 'pumpkin'  
*-nyoro*, 'soft': class 3 *muti munyoro*, 'a soft tree'; class 5 *dhaka nyoro*, 'soft mud'; class 9 *nzungu nyoro*, 'a soft ground-nut';  
*-mbishi*, 'unripe': class 6 *maranjisi mambishi*, 'unripe oranges';  
class 5 *ranjisi mbishi*, 'an unripe orange';  
class 9 *nyama mbishi*, 'uncooked meat'.

No example was found with [m] as initial, but it may be assumed to belong in this category.

- rolled /r/:

-*refu*, 'tall', 'high', 'long': class 1 *musikana murefu*, 'a tall girl';  
class 5 *gomo refu*, 'a high mountain'; class 9 *mhino ndefu* or *refu*, 'a long nose'.

- semi-vowel /w/:  
*windo/mawindo*,<sup>56</sup> 'window'.

b Voiceless initials: Some voiceless initials are not affected by the process of voicing: this rarely includes consonants which are identical to those which become voiced when entered into class 5, as well as a few others.

b (i) Consonants identical to the voiceless set [p, t, k, ch, sv, tsv, pf]: Hardly any nominals register in class 5 with an initial belonging to the above set. The very few recorded cases include mostly borrowed words and it is interesting to note that, although their plural is in class 6, the singular allows for variation in class allocation between classes 5 and 9. This proves conclusively that their initial is not really suited to class 5, and hints at the strength and effectiveness of the conditioning:

classes 5 or 9 *purazi* 'farm' — plural *mapurazi* — (from Afrikaans);

classes 5 or 9 *tikiti* 'ticket' (from English);

class 5 *cheri* 'cherry' (from English);

classes 5 or 9 *svondo* 'week' or 'Sunday' (from English);<sup>57</sup>

*kii* is allocated to class 9 only in spite of the plural *makii* in class 6 (from English).

Interestingly, the adjective *-pfupi* 'short' remains unchanged throughout, irrespective of concord:<sup>58</sup>

class 1 *munhu mupfupi*, 'a short person';

class 5 *banga pfupi*, 'a short knife'; class 10 *nzou pfupi*, 'short elephants'.

b (ii) Other voiceless initials [f, s, sh, ts]: Voiceless consonants which are not part of the distribution [f, s, sh, ts] are unchanged although they do have voiced counterparts in the language:<sup>59</sup>

*-shoma*, 'few' or 'little': class 4 *miti mishoma*, 'few trees';

class 5 *basa shoma*, 'little work'; class 10 *nzou shoma*, 'few elephants';

*fafitera/mafafitera*, 'window'/ 'windows'; *sadza/masadza*, 'porridge';

*tsaga/matsaga*, 'sack'/ 'sacks'.

<sup>56</sup> *Hwindo* also occurs.

<sup>57</sup> Some speakers take advantage of the alternative class allocation to bypass the ambiguity, and use *svondo* in class 5 for 'week' (*svondo rino*, 'this week'), and in class 9 for Sunday (*svondo ino*, 'this Sunday'). However, usage among first-language speakers is inconsistent.

<sup>58</sup> Its variant *-fupi* also remains unchanged; see Dale's *Shona Companion*, 30.

<sup>59</sup> The fact that some consonants are not voiced when they could be suggests the inaccuracy of the term voicing to define the phonetic process involved *per se*. The data may here lead to a division of a number of the consonants into two sets: those amenable to change and those which are not. More in-depth research is needed in this area.

So far, class 5 nominal prefix, in primary function, may be summarized as

- *i-*, *ri-* for monosyllabic stems
- *zi-* for vowel-commencing stems
- voicing for a limited set of voiceless consonants (with lexical exceptions)
- no change for other consonants

I now examine the evidence suggested by class 5 when in secondary function.

#### 4 THE AUGMENTATIVE: CLASS 5 IN SECONDARY ASSIGNMENT

As stated earlier, class 5 is both a primary and a secondary class. In the latter capacity, it conveys an augmentative and often derogatory shade of meaning.<sup>60</sup>

Augmentatives are obtained either by prefix substitution, or replacement, or by the superimposition or addition of a prefix. This process involves two class 5 nominal prefix allomorphs, *zi-* and voicing (excluding, as one would expect, *i-* and *ri-*), whose distribution as secondary prefixes mirrors their occurrences as primary prefixes, if only partially. The process is by no means clear-cut and allows for variation as well as alternative forms in many given instances — augmentatives are a field quite naturally open to individual creativity, and this is often reflected in differing judgements by first-language speakers on the acceptability of a particular item.

It is clear that the setting up of a class, namely 21, distinct from class 5 only in its nominal prefix, to accommodate augmentatives with *zi-* prefix as favoured in the accounts of Shona class system under review, was geared to facilitate the presentation of the system as a whole, not to mention the comparative aims. Construing class 21 also avoids the rather embarrassing feature of a class whose prefix can sequence twice on the same item, whether in identical or in different allomorphs.<sup>61</sup> However, it artificially splits the formation of augmentatives, separating those derived through voicing from those exhibiting prefix *zi-*. This rationale might further lead to division of all classes which manifest both primary and secondary use: namely classes 1, 2, 7, 8 and 11.

<sup>60</sup> As I am concerned with morphological issues, I shall not dwell on the precise meaning of the augmentative examples, the general gloss of 'big' being sufficient.

<sup>61</sup> Fortune, however, acknowledges such a possibility when class 10 with *dzi-* is posited as a secondary noun class, providing examples such as *dzinzira*, 'several paths' from *nzira*, 'path', analyzed as *dzi-* class 10; *O-* class 10; *N-* class 9 in *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 66.

I contend that the questionable gain in simplicity of presentation is not sufficient justification for positing yet another class in an already rich system, especially when this results in a confusing relationship between class 5 and class 21.<sup>62</sup>

The alternative theory involving merging class 21 and class 5 has the advantage of obviating the need for a class in which the adjectival prefix differs from the nominal one, thereby nurturing the artificial split between the prefixes of adjectives and nouns.

My proposal can be viewed as a return to a more classical analysis, since previous writers used to foster a united account: Doke treated *zi-* as a member of a single \**ri-* class<sup>63</sup> and pointed out Shona *ri-* (standing for class 5) as an example of an augmentative prefix in Bantu, before granting it a class of its own in his later survey of Southern Bantu languages.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.1 Prefix substitution: *zi-* and voicing

Literature on the subject, especially that of Fortune,<sup>65</sup> upholds many cases of prefix substitution which sound unfamiliar, to say the least, to the few Shona-speaking Harare youths interviewed. This would suggest that these examples pertain either to a classical register (so-called 'deep Shona'), an archaic stage of the language, or dialectal usage but this does not detract from their validity as instances of the process at work. The present tendency in such cases seems to favour superimposition of prefix.

The process of prefix substitution is as follows: the original nominal prefix is replaced by an allomorph of class 5 nominal prefix, in line with its distribution and linked, as has been shown, to the stem-initial.

##### 4.1.1 Vowel-commencing: *z(i)-*

*zana*, 'big child' or 'naughty child'; compare — *mwana*, (stem \**-ana*)<sup>66</sup> class 1 'child';

<sup>62</sup> For instance, Mkanganwi, 'An outline of the morphology of substantives . . .' places vowel-commencing stems which have *z(i)-* as a nominal prefix in class 21 (*zanda*, 'egg' and *zana*, 'idea'), stating that they are the only words in which class 21 is primary.

<sup>63</sup> Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, 126.

<sup>64</sup> C. Doke, *Bantu Linguistic Terminology* (London, New York, Toronto, Longman, 1935), 57 and C. Doke, *The Southern Bantu Languages* (London, Oxford University Press, IAI, 1954), 52.

<sup>65</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 104.

<sup>66</sup> 'compare' is used here to refer to another instance of the same stem, whence the augmentative cannot easily be considered as derived. Herbert argues the same case as that given here by 'compare', and goes even further when he says all connotatives obtained through prefix substitution 'are not synchronically derived by rules from the normal noun class forms'. See R. K. Herbert, 'Prefix restructuring: Lexical representation and the Bantu noun', *Studies in African Linguistics* (1977), Supplement 7, 106. However, this view seems to bypass conclusions which could legitimately be reached by a non-native speaker.

*zoto*, 'large fireplace'; compare — *choto*, (stem \*-oto) class 7 'fireplace';

*zenga*, 'large frying pan'; compare — *rwenga*, (stem \*-enga)<sup>67</sup> class 11 'frying pan';

*zinhu*, 'big thing'; compare — *chinhu*, (stem \*-nhu) class 7 'thing'.

**4.1.2 Consonant-commencing stems:** When the stem-initial is a consonant, depending on its phonetic nature, entering the noun into class 5 entails the same possibilities as seen when class 5 functions as a primary class.

**4.1.2.1 Initial belonging to the voiceable set: Voicing** The initial when belonging to the voiceable set, may undergo voicing although this process is far from systematic:

*gadzi*, 'big woman' < *mukadzi*, class 1 'woman'; *gomana*, 'big boy' < *mukomana*, class 1 'boy';

*danda*, 'big log' < *mutanda*, class 3 'log';

*bini*, 'big handle' < *mupini*, class 3 'handle'; *bino*, 'big nose' < *mhino*, class 9 'nose';

*jembere*, 'old hag' < *chembere*, class 9 'old woman'.

Some constructions, although apparently phonologically permissible, are belied by usage:

\**guyu* < *mukuyu*, class 3 'fig tree'; \**bembere* < *chipembere*, class 7 'rhino'.

Some other changes have been recorded, especially the voicing and strengthening of [s] into the affricate, [dz]:

*dzikana*, 'large girl' < *musikana*, class 1 'girl'; *dzoro*, 'big head' < *musoro*, class 3 'head'.

**4.1.2.2 Unvoiceable initials: No change** Uncharacteristically and with varying degrees of acceptability by first-language speakers, a few nouns whose initials are not amenable to voicing may be lodged in class 5, experiencing no change of initial:

(?)<sup>68</sup> *rume*, 'undesirable man' < *murume*, class 1 'man';

(?) *sikana*, 'large girl' < *musikana*, class 1 'girl'.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> I was unable to verify these last two examples with any of my informants.

<sup>68</sup> (?) indicates a doubtful instance/feature.

<sup>69</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 77. However, I recorded only *dzikana* with reinforcement of the initial, quoted above.

#### 4.2 Superimposition of allomorph *zi-*

The other device yielding augmentatives is superimposition of the allomorph *zi-*, which seems a more popular option than prefix substitution and is more commonly used in everyday speech. *Zi-* is added to the front of nouns in several different classes, class 5 included. This gives rise to a sequence of (at least) two class prefixes.

The addition of *zi-* is most conspicuous with syllabic prefixes, but affects non-syllabic ones as well.

##### 4.2.1 With syllabic prefixes

The superimposition of the allomorph occurs consistently with class 1 and class 3 nouns, and more rarely with class 11:

*zimunhu*, 'big person' < *munhu*, class 1 'person';

*zimurungu*, 'big white person' < *murungu*, class 1 'white person';

*zimuti*, 'big tree' < *muti*, class 3 'tree'; (?) *zirwizi*, 'big river' < *rwizi*, class 11 'river'.

Superimposition may provide an alternative to prefix substitution, and it would appear that the young generation prefer it:

*zimoto* rather than *zoto*, 'big fire' < *moto*, class 3 'fire';

*zimwana* rather than *zana*, 'naughty child' < *mwana*, class 1 'child'.

*Zi-* as secondary prefix is noticeable with the few vowel-commencing class 5 nouns which already have *zi-* as their primary prefix:

*ziziso*, 'big eye' < *ziso*, 'eye'; *zizino*, 'big tooth' < *zino*, 'tooth'.

It applies also to class 5 monosyllabic stems exhibiting (in my view) *i-* as a prefix:

*ziibvi* (also *zibvi*), 'big knee'; < *ibvi*, (stem *\*-bvi*)<sup>70</sup> class 5 'knee'.

##### 4.2.2 With non-syllabic prefixes

Of concern here are class 9 and class 5 nouns.

(1) Class 9:

*zinzeve*, 'big ear' < *nzeve*, class 9 'ear'; *zitifura*, 'big table' < *tafura*, class 9 'table'.

In the following example, prefix addition tends to be preferred to prefix substitution: *zimhuka* rather than *buka*, 'big beast' < *mhuka*, class 9 'animal', given by Fortune.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The possible merger of the two [i] in sequence is another instance of the optional phonological rule posited earlier allowing for the deletion of [i], when in contact with a vowel, as suggested above.

<sup>71</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 77.

## (ii) Class 5:

Prefix addition affects class 5 nouns, irrespective of their being primary or secondary class:

## a. Primary:

*zibadza*, 'big hoe' < *badza*, 'hoe'; *zigore*, 'huge cloud' < *gore*, 'cloud'.

## b. Secondary:

Prefix addition in this case entails augmentatives of second degree, which are often considered equivalent to the first degree, and the result of stylistic or individual variations:

*zigadzi*, 'large girl' < *gadzi*, class 5<sup>72</sup> < *mukadzi*, class 1 'girl';

*zigomana*, 'big boy' < *gomana*, class 5<sup>73</sup> < *mukomana*, class 1 'boy';

*zibini*, 'large handle' < *bini*, class 5 'large handle' < *mupini*, class 3 'handle';

*zidzoro*, 'big head' < *dzoro*, class 5 'big head' < *musoro*, class 3 'head'.

Alternatively, prefix addition may occur when the first degree is, with unvoiceable stem-initials, ill- or even un-attested:

*zirume*, 'undesirable man' < (?) *rume*, class 5<sup>74</sup> < *murume*, class 1 'man'.

In the case of non-class 5 primary nouns amenable to voicing, the double shape (voicing and *zi-*) of class 5 nominal prefix associates with the twofold augmentative construction — substitution or superimposition of prefix — to generate a variety of forms:

*mukadzi* ><sup>75</sup> *gadzi*, *zigadzi* and *zimukadzi*;

*musikana* > (?) *sikana*, *dzikana* and *zisikana*, *zidzikana*, and *zimusikana* even though it should be noted that the superimposition of *zi-* whenever voicing of stem-initial is possible sounds very awkward, as in *zimukadzi*, *zimusikana*.

## 4.2.3 Plural

The formation of the class 6 plural follows the various possibilities reported in the marking of the secondary class in the singular.

## (i) With voicing of initial

The voiced stem-initial may be conserved or sometimes, on apparently dialectal lines, there may be a reversion to the unvoiced stem-initial which constitutes the basis of the stem:

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> > implies derivation from the form to the left of it.



*mhino*, 'nose' > *mino*, 'big nose' > *mabino* or *mapino*, 'big noses';  
*mukadzi*, 'woman' > *gadzi*, 'big woman' > *magadzi* or *makadzi*, 'big women'.

(ii) With unchanged initial

The same phenomenon may be observed in cases where the stem-initial remains unchanged, not being amenable to voicing: *rume*, 'big man' > *marume*, 'big men'.

In both cases, however, *zi-* is often introduced in the plural and the following forms, which coincide with those obtained as plural of class 5 with superimposed *zi-*, are more common than the previous ones (see below): *mazipino*, 'big noses'; *mazikadzi*, 'big women'; *mazirume*, 'big men'.

(iii) With use of *zi-*

When *zi-* is resorted to in class 5, it is retained in class 6; a behaviour reminiscent of that of the limited set of nouns where *zi-* is primary, viz. *ziso*, 'eyes' > *maziso*, 'eyes'; *zana*, 'big child' > *mazana*, 'big children'.

In cases of superimposition, prefixes other than those in class 5 revert to their regular plural class, which leads to a row of up to three elicited prefixes:

*zimunhu*, 'big man' > *mazivanhu*, 'big men': (*ma-* class 6; *zi-* class 5 and *va-* class 2);

*zimuti*, 'big tree' > *mazimuti*, 'big trees': (*ma-* class 6; *zi-* class 5 and *mi-* class 4); and

*zimhuka*, 'large animal' > *mazimhuka*, 'large animals': (*ma-* class 6; *zi-* class 5 and *N-* class 10).<sup>76</sup>

Accordingly, initials undergoing the class 5 voicing process yield to the unvoiced stem-initials: *zibadza*, 'large hoe' > *mazipadza*, 'large hoes': (*ma-* class 6 and *zi-* class 5).

This rule applies when *zi-* acts as a primary prefix as well, with vowel-commencing stems:

*ziso*, 'eye' > *ziziso*, 'big eye' > *maziziso*, 'big eyes': (*ma-* class 6; *zi-* class 5 and *zi-* class 5).<sup>77</sup>

As mentioned earlier, this process tends to become more generalized and is by far the commonest when, due to the nature of the stem-initial, two (or more) class 5 forms are available:

<sup>76</sup> As the nominal prefix of classes 9 and 10 is identical it may be assumed, analogically, that the nasal in *zimhuka* stands for class 9 nominal prefix and in *mazimhuka*, for that in class 10.

<sup>77</sup> These forms are indicative of the process of integration of *zi-* into the stem.

*gadzi* and *zigadzi*, 'big woman' > *mazikadzi*, 'big women' rather than *magadzi* or *makadzi*;

(?)*sikana*, *dzikana*, *zisikana* and *zidzikana*, 'big girl' > *mazisikana*, 'big girls' rather than *masikana* or *madzikana*;

(?) *rume* and *zirume*, 'big man' > *mazirume*, 'big men' rather than *marume*.

#### 4.2.4 Adjectives

Adjectives, whose class agreement is determined by their governing nouns, are usually not liable to connotation through a change of class. In class 5 most items undergo voicing and, since they are all consonant-commencing (see Dale's table of adjectives in *Shona Companion*), this is sufficient to disqualify *zi-* as a relevant allomorph.

However, some speakers accept, and a few want superimposition of *zi-* prefix following a noun in the augmentative, for some adjectival stems at least. This can be interpreted either as an analogical extension of the nominal prefix allomorph to the adjective, which again supports their sharing the same set of concords, or as a meaningful device:

*zinyoka zidemadema*, 'a very large jet-black snake';<sup>78</sup>

*zimurungu ziguru*, 'a very big white person'.<sup>79</sup>

The data produced illustrate the intricate relationship between the two main allomorphs of class 5 nominal prefix; namely voicing and *zi-*, when both its primary and secondary functions are taken into account. It follows that all augmentatives would best be considered as belonging to class 5, since they resort to the same prefix allomorphs as 'normal' nouns. Apart from phonological constraints linked to the nature of the stem-initial, the distribution of these allomorphs appears to be conditioned by the primary prefix of the noun.

This comprehensive view of class 5 leads one to regard the class 5 nominal prefix as a scatter of conditioned allomorphs, both on phonological and lexical lines.

Before turning to the representation of the class 5 nominal prefix, we must highlight the significant evidence produced by the copulative construction in support of our view of *i-* as an allomorph of the nominal prefix, since it contributes to the construing of a 'cover form'.

<sup>78</sup> Dale, *Shona Companion*, 28.

<sup>79</sup> Mkanganwi, 'An outline of the morphology of substantives ...', 115.

## 5 THE COPULATIVE EVIDENCE

Formation of the positive copulative construction in Shona resorts to three devices, according to the nature of the noun class prefix. I review what is relevant to this discussion, leaving aside nouns included in so-called classes 1a, 2a and 2b, whose copulatives are specific in incorporating a non-prefix element, *ndi*.

## 5.1 Syllabic prefixes

For all nominals endowed with syllabic prefixes, be they noun or adjective, all copulatives except for classes 1a, 2a and 2b, are expressed by raising the tone of the otherwise low prefix.<sup>80</sup>

The well-known mnemonic rhyme furnishes ready examples of this process: *murume múrume, vasikana vásikana, mapanga mápanga*, 'a man is a man, girls are girls, knives are knives'.

With adjectives: *muti uyu múrefu*, class 3 'this tree is tall'.

Nominals with the syllabic allomorphs of classes 5, 9 and 10, among which we tentatively include *i*, behave likewise (see below for variants).

(i) Class 5: *i*; *ri*; *zi*

Examples pertain here to monosyllabic stems and augmentatives with *zi*:

*izwi izwi*, 'a word is a word'; *ibwe ibwe*, 'a stone is a stone';

*rifa*, 'it is inheritance' (suggested during the University of Zimbabwe seminar);

*zigomana zigomana*, 'a big boy is a big boy';

*zimuti zimuti*, 'a big tree is a big tree';

(?) *iri ziso*, 'this is an eye'.<sup>81</sup>

This process affects adjectives as well: *banga fdzva*, 'the knife is new'.

(ii) Class 9 and class 10 *i*; (*dzi*)

Examples in these categories are limited to monosyllabic stems.

Class 9 and class 10 nouns are generally undifferentiated as far as number is concerned:

*imbwa imbwa*, class 9 or class 10 'a dog is a dog', or 'dogs are dogs';

*inda inda*, class 9 or class 10 'a louse is a louse' or 'lice are lice'.

Adjectives show no specificity and behave as the nouns referred to above: *tafura idzi itsva*, class 10 'these tables are new'.

<sup>80</sup> The similarity exhibited by nouns and adjectives in the copulative construction is further evidence of their close grammatical relationship.

<sup>81</sup> For some reason the template \**ziso ziso* was rejected outright.

Number differentiation through nominal prefix coincides with the few words that form the basis for the *dzi*-allomorph of class 10 nominal prefix. These are limited to the aforementioned words *imba/dzimba* 'house/'houses', and *dzimbo*, 'songs'; whose plurals allow use of the same device: *imba imba*, class 9 'a house is a house'; *dzimba dzimba*, 'houses are houses'; *dzimbo dzimbo*, 'songs are songs'.

## 5.2 Non-syllabic prefixes

Apart from a few locative examples (below) and, as already stated, nouns allocated to class 1a, 2a and 2b, those nouns endowed with non-syllabic prefixes are said to resort to a copulative formative consisting of a high tone *i*-vowel preceding the noun:

*bere ibere*, class 5 'a hyena is a hyena';

*shumba ishumba*, classes 9 and 10 'a lion is a lion' and 'lions are lions'.

Furthermore, this same device is recorded alternatively with the syllabic allomorphs of class 5 and class 10, particularly when class 5 *zi*- is primary, as well as with the two words exhibiting *dzi*- in class 10; the results being more colloquial:

*ziso iziso*, class 5 'an eye is an eye'; *zino izino*, 'a tooth is a tooth';

*dzimba idzimba*, class 10 'houses are houses'; *dzimbo idzimbo*, 'songs are songs'.

However, with class 5 *zi*- in augmentative meaning, this possibility seems questionable, to say the least:

(?)*iri, izigomana*, 'this one is a big boy'.

These alternative forms thus confirm the degrammaticalization of both prefixes in primary usage, which *zi*'s possible retention in the plural formation and *dzi*'s extremely limited distribution, also demonstrate. As the initial syllable is no longer felt to be functioning as a prefix, it seems safe to assume that those words are assimilated to class 5 or class 10 nouns endowed with a non-syllabic prefix.

Possible counter-examples regarding the copulative construction are mentioned in the traditional accounts under review, but are left unexplained. Fortune<sup>82</sup> states that with some nouns controlling class 17 agreement but bearing no overt mark of any existing syllabic prefix, be it class 17 (*ku*-) or any other, the copulative is indicated by tone-raising of the first syllable (which entails a restructuring of the tone pattern of the word):

<sup>82</sup> Fortune, *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1, 139.

*mberí*, 'in front' > *mberí uko*, 'it is in front there' (not \**imberí uko*)  
*zasí*, 'down' > *zásí uko*, 'it is down there' (not \**izasí uko*)  
*shúre*, 'behind' > *shúre uko*, 'it is behind' (not \**ishure uko*)

These facts support my interpretation of 'formative' |f-| as an allomorph of classes 5, 9 and 10 nominal prefix, and thus suggest the existence of a long form of the prefix including [i-]. This long form is retained due to phonological constraints with otherwise monosyllabic stems in most dialects and in the copulative which requires a syllable to bear the high tone.<sup>83</sup>

This interpretation also explains the absence of a segmental embodiment of the copulative in the three locative examples given above, in spite of the lack of a syllabic prefix. As *i-* is not a class 17 prefix and *ndi-*, which are semantically restricted, would be out of place, the only remaining option to mark this difference was, in my view, the raising of the tone on the first syllable.

This understanding of the copulative simplifies the treatment of the monosyllabic stems of classes 5, 9 and 10, which otherwise would require special mention of the substitution of a formative *i-* to the epenthetic in the copulative construction.<sup>84</sup>

Secondly, it consolidates the description of the copulative construction as a whole, since all nouns except those of so-called classes 1a, 2a, 2b and the three aforementioned locative cases, then become amenable to the same procedure, viz, tone-raising of the nominal prefix. This treatment conforms to the results of Pongweni's supra-segmental analysis of the copulative, which concludes that the tonal behaviour of nouns in the copulative is 'unrelated' to the phonic nature of the class nominal prefix (that is, syllabic versus non-syllabic). The dividing line separates nouns allocated to classes 1a, 2a and 2b requiring *ndi-*, irrespective of their prefix, from all others. This view is expressed by Pongweni when he states:

It does not seem to matter whether or not a noun has a noun class prefix [that is, a syllabic or non-syllabic allomorph] . . . The nouns of the traditional classes 1a and 2a, whether prefixed or unprefixed, . . . behave differently.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> This strategy is reminiscent of Lamba copulative, according to Doke's treatment of Shona class 8. This class corresponds to Common Bantu 5, the nominal prefix of which is |ili-| with vowel- or nasal-commencing stems, and |i-| with consonant-commencing stems. The copulative is formed by shortening the nominal prefix VCV to CV + tone raising, which causes the allomorph |i-| to revert to the full form of the prefix, |ili-|, which is then reduced to CV in C. Doke, *Textbook of Lamba Grammar* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1938), 309.

<sup>84</sup> Fortune, *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, 371.

<sup>85</sup> Pongweni, *Studies in Shona Phonetics* . . . , 204-5.

## 6 REPRESENTATION OF CLASS 5 NOMINAL PREFIX AS A SCATTER OF ALLOMORPHS

If we acknowledge the various allomorphs displayed by class 5 nominal prefix we can then posit a scatter of forms whose distribution, only partially attributable to phonological constraints, is also related to lexical and syntactical constraints.

## 1) Raw stems:

- i) vowel commencing: *zi-*
  - ii) consonant commencing:
    - a) monosyllabic: *i-*, *o-*, or *ri-* (dialectally)
    - b) with stem-initials [p, t, k, ch, tsv, pf, sv]: voicing or *o-* in some adoptives
    - c) other consonants non subject to voicing: *o-*
- 2) Prefixed-nouns: *zi-* (augmentative)
- 3) Copulative — tone-raising of prefix:
  - a) with syllabic allomorphs: *i-/zi-*
  - b) with non-syllabic ones and *zi-* in some cases: re-introduction of *i-*.

Any arbitrary symbol could be construed to embody the voicing process since, clearly, the changes entailed are no longer caused by a segmental sequence but occur by virtue of the entry of these nouns into class 5, as is evidenced by the hesitant behaviour of recent adoptives. The scarcity of words resisting this conditioning is indicative of the strength of the process at work.

Fortune expressed the view that changes in the stem-initial consonant were due to a former *\*ri-* prefix. Even if we accept the historical perspective, it seems unlikely that an *r* consonant should have played any part in such an important process only to disappear completely. Such changes are generally attributed, in Bantu, to the influence of a closed vowel on a following consonant. This is especially the case in languages such as Shona, which have undergone a reduction from a 7-vowel system to a 5-vowel system.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> The classical hypothesis on Common or Proto-Bantu posits a 7-vowel system, the two extreme front vowels being represented by cedillas under *i* and *u*, as *ǐ* and *ǔ*.

Historically, the inclusion of the latent vowel in the prefix suggests the following sequence for the main allomorphs: from a nominal prefix construed as *\*iri-* a first stage would delete the 'r' consonant which is in a weak position. The two 'i' in contact would then be merged, entailing the modification, when possible, of the stem-initial (ie 'voicing'), and disappear in all except monosyllabic stems and copulative phrases. Hence,

*i-CV\** monosyllabic stems  
*\*iri-C...* > *\*ii-C...* > CV(CV)CV\* longer stems  
*i-C...* copulative.

Therefore, if we wish to coin symbols reminiscent of real features, then V- for voicing might be appropriate, with \*i- or perhaps \*f- as a 'cover form' catering also for the copulative. If we extend the scope of V- to encompass the lack of change occurring with non-voiceable initials, another statement of the scatter of allomorphs of class 5 nominal prefix could read:

Class 5 nominal prefix \*f-:

- i-: monosyllabic stems (dialectally); copulative construction except some words with zi- and ri-
- ʔ-, rarely ri-: monosyllabic stems (dialectally)
- V- (voicing of voiceable initials, no change for non-voiceable ones): consonant-commencing stems
- zi-: vowel-commencing stems and augmentatives with non-voiceable initials, including prefixes.

#### CONCLUSION

I have argued that the rationale behind positing \*ri- as a general cover form for Shona class 5 nominal prefix should be abandoned in favour of the concept of a cluster or scatter of allomorphs. This cluster could include |ri-| itself, as a real if rare form |i-|, and positing |V-| for voicing. Furthermore, this cluster could in its entirety, be subsumed by \*f- since the vowel [-i] surfaces in the majority of cases, in the copulative at least. This theory would obviate the need to resort to an epenthetic vowel in the case of monosyllabic stems and would, in turn, allow for some simplification in the general account of the copulative.

The sign \* implies the word border. For vowel-commencing stems, \*izi- would have merged with the initial vowel of the stem, leading to a restructured \*i-zv..., which would then evolve into zv... and f-zv... for the copulative (v' representing the result of vowel coalescence, i + ...):  
 \*izi-VCV(CV) > \*i-zvCV(CV) > zvCV(CV),

f-zvCV(CV) or zv' CV(CV) in the copulative.

In the case of superimposition of the prefix, the scope of zi- would be extended, the possible long copulative izi- then being viewed either as a retention of a longer, prior form, or as an analogically supplemented device.