

Moro Noun Classes

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This document outlines the Moro noun classes. The data was provided by Angelo, Israel, Ibrahim and a few others. The noun classes are identified by their singular and plural prefixes and by their concords and are summarised in the following chart ('φ' indicates zero prefix):

Singular prefix	singular concord	plural prefix	plural concord	semantic identification
φ/w-	g-	l-	l-	people
l-	l-	ñ-	ñ-	animals and body parts?
ɖ-	ɖ-	w-	g-	trees
φ	g-	n-	n-	common things
l-/ɽ-/ɽr-	l-/lɽr-/ɽr-	ŋ-	ŋ-	long things, hollow & deep things, round things
ɖ-	ɖ-	r-	r-	long things?
ɖ-	ɖ-	φ	g-	??
ɖ-	ɖ-	y-	y-	large and harmful things
ŋ-	ŋ-	ñ-	ñ-	domestic and small animals
ŋ-	ŋ-	—	—	liquids and abstract nouns
ɖ-	ɖ-	—	—	abstract nouns (emotions)
	r-		y-	cow, goat, other irregular nouns
	y-		y-	foreign words

Morphophonemics

There is some variation in how the plurals of some classes are made. These mostly concern vowel changes. In the above table, when the singular prefix is 'φ', the noun starts with a vowel and the plural is made by adding a consonant prefix and sometimes changing the vowel: 'i' almost always changes to 'ə', 'e', 'o' and 'u' sometimes change to 'ə', but 'a' and 'ə' generally do not change. Note that in the class which has a singular prefix, but zero plural prefix (class ɖ/φ), these changes occur when the singular prefix is added. I have not managed to extract any rules for these changes from my data.

Other changes are easier to explain with rules:

- If the noun starts with 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u' followed by 'ɖ' these two letters are replaced by 'nd' in the plural.
- If the noun starts with 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u' followed by 'nd', the plural is formed by simply discarding the vowel. However the plural of a noun which starts with 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u' followed by 'r' or 'ɽ' is sometimes formed by replacing the two initial letters with 'nd', and sometimes by adding the appropriate prefix. In the latter case, a vowel change may or may not occur.

In the classes with nouns starting with 'ɽ', 'ɽr', or 'lɽr', the plural form is made by inserting a vowel after the plural prefix. This is generally 'ə'. In the cases of 'ɽr' and 'lɽr', the 'ɽ' is dropped in the plural form.

Class distinctions

The noun classes classification above is different to that given by Stevenson [1]. I do not know whether this is because I have insufficient data, my classification is wrong because I have no knowledge of the culture or whether the classes have in fact changed. There is certainly some discrepancy in the noun class prefixes, but this may be due to differences in orthography. In Stevenson's classification, there are a one class which I have not found. That is a small class consisting of 'eye' and other parts of the body with class prefixes 'l' and 'i'. The other differences are discussed below.

- In the above classification, two noun classes are labeled as containing long thin things. Stevenson labels the l/ŋ class as the unit collective class, and the ɖ/r class as consisting of long thin things. I see no evidence for labeling the l/ŋ class as the unit collective class.

- The /ñ/ class, denoted animals and body parts in the above classification does not feature in Stevenson's classification at all. It seems to consist mostly of body parts, small wild animals, insects and birds. However there are many body parts and animals in other classes and it is not clear what is special about these animals. It may be that these are animals found in large numbers, thus making it a unit collective class, but I do have not enough knowledge about these animals to come to a conclusion.
- The common things class is so labeled because it contains many different objects and because Stevenson labels it as such.
- The trees class contains only trees, but there are many trees in other classes. As I have no knowledge of which trees these are, I cannot comment on whether this class is disappearing or whether there is a good reason for the other trees to be in different classes. This class is not within Stevenson's classification.
- The ɖ/ɸ class contains few words and is thus difficult to label. Stevenson puts this class with the large and harmful things class, but I am reluctant to do this as the plural concord agreement prefix is different. In fact it may be part of the trees class as it has the same concord agreements and most of the words have something to do with trees.
- I have found an extra class of abstract nouns (the 'ɖ' class), but this may correspond to Stevenson's infinitive class. I do not yet have enough knowledge of the language to comment on this.

References:

Stevenson, R. C. *A Survey of the Phonetics and Grammatical Structure of the Nuba Mountain Languages with Particular Reference to Otoro, Katcha and Nyimat*. Africa und Uebersee, vol XLI 1956-57

Data

People	ɸ/w	1	
adənia		ladənia	middle-aged woman
ebai		ləbai	slave
ebaŋgen		ləbaŋgen	her husband
eɖa		leɖa	person
emaden		ləmaden	colleague
eɕenia		ləɕenia	man, father
ēdəmwa		lēdəmwa	young boy
ēmu		lēmu	arab
ibin		ləbin	his/her brother or sister in law
iɖia		ləɖia	son
maji		liji	man
ome		ləme	fish
omwarəŋ		ləmwarəŋ	Moro people
opo		ləpo	old_woman
orəba		lorəba	his/her bother or sister
uɖurəba		ləɖurəba	uncle
umərɕin		ləmərɕin	other wife
ummia		lummia	boy
unwa		lənwa	father or mother in law
uɕəra		lɕəra	pig
uɕɕɕia		ləɕɕɕia	old man
waŋgalo		ləŋgelalo	animal
waŋge		ləŋge	thing
waro		laro	hen

Animals and Body Parts

	l	ñ	
lagwoɾu	ñagwoɾu		hornbill
lakim	ñakim		hospital
lamba	ñamba		lamp
laməɾəd	ñaməɾəd		snake, kind of, allowed to live in houses
lanɣəɾre	ñanɣəɾre		piapae, black (crow family)
larəbaba	ñarəbaba		shoe, old, made of leather
laɾaɾa	ñaɾaɾa		gland in the neck
laɾəŋwata	ñaɾəŋwata		goard
law	ñaw		mosquito
ldiŋgua	ñəliŋgua		frog
ldu	ñəlu		frog
leɾendaw	ñeɾendaw		bird, kind of
lədəman	ñədəman		kidney
ləfəɾəŋ	ñəfəɾəŋ		bird, kind of
ləgəɾata	ñəgəɾata		spur
ləgopa	ñəgopa		bird, type of
ləgurguri	ñəgurguri		swift, swallow
lələlədi	ñələlədi		mosquito larva
ləm	ñəm		bear
ləmbəleləŋ	ñəmbəleləŋ		beetle (buzzing)
ləmwə	ñəmwə		hedgehog
ləmwə	ñəmwə		flea
ləpondəŋ	ñəpondəŋ		bush baby
ləpwaɬia	ñəpwaɬia		udder
ləɾni	ñəɾni		ant, red or large black
lətufəɾəñ	ñətufəɾəñ		bird, kind of
ləbəɾəli	ñəbəɾəli		fish, small, type of
ləmi	ñəmi		beard
ləri	ñəri		leg
ləɾia	ñəɾia		leg, lower
liñjuɾiɟuɾi	ñiñjuɾiɟuɾi		cougal
lobar	ñobar		partridge
lobəɾa	ñobəɾa		hoof
loman	ñoman		day
loman	ñoman		finger, toe
lomba	ñomba		snake, kind of
lombotəña	ñombotəña		thorn
lopa	ñopa		bird, type of
loɾa	ñoɾa		egret
loɾain	ñoɾain		fly
loɾe	ñoɾe		ankle
loɾel	ñoɾel		hawk, small
loɾəl	ñoɾəl		eagle
loɾəŋata	ñoɾəŋata		bowl, small
lota	ñota		seagull
loɾor	ñəɾor		hernia of belly button
lɾəndia	ñəɾndia		bead
ltəm	ñtəm		barren woman
ltuŋgu	ñətuŋgu		owl
lubələbəlia	ñubələbəlia		ear lobe
lubəliña	ñubəliña		ear lobe
lubupwa	ñubupwa		duck
luguldu	ñuguldu		dove, large
lumbolua	ñumbolua		bowl for food
luməra	ñuməra		basket
luŋguldi	ñuŋguldi		parrakeet
lwəɬina	ñwəɬina		gall bladder
lware	ñware		tabilti, seed of a kind of tree
lwaria	ñwaria		duodenum
lwatawte	ñwatawte		gland in neck

lwatəɾe
ɾra
ɾradia
ɾragəga
ɾre
ɾrəlde
ɾruma
ɾruwa
ɾrwa
ɾrwaga
ɾrwania
ɾrwaɾa

ñwatəɾe
ñəra
ñərodia
ñəragəga
ñəre
ñerlde
ñəruma
ñəruwa
ñərwa
ñərwaga
ñərwania
ñərwaɾa

heel
armadillo
tail spur of human
animal, type of like cat
forearm, top half of; steppe
needle, big
ram
testes
monkey, kind of small monkey
lymph nodes
fruit, type of
lymph nodes

Trees ɖ w

ɖəbwada
ɖəmbərwa
ɖəɾəŋal
ɖobowərɾa
ɖobowərrəŋa
ɖoldaiyoria
ɖoldwara
ɖolwaldaiñiri
ɖona
ɖora
ɖorətəl
ɖoɾwandal
ɖowarra

wəbwada
wəmbərwa
wəɾəŋal
wobowərɾa
wobowərrəŋa
woldaiyoria
woldwara
wolwaldaiñiri
wona
wora
worətəl
woɾwandal
wowarra

tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of
tree, type of

Common Things ɸ n

aba
abəreda
abəɾa
adam
adəlwa
aləŋa
am
amcu
ame
aməca
ara
arabapwada
arcəŋgəl
arra
atia
atəndəra
əbalaiña
əbamba
əbambəñia
əbartəŋ
əbatən
əbəda
əbəlda
əbia
ədopəɾa
əlaldabwa
ələŋ
əmbəre

naba
nabəreda
nabəɾa
nadam
nadəlwa
naləŋa
nam
namcu
name
naməca
nara
narabapwada
narcəŋgəl
narra
natia
natəndəra
nəbalaiña
nəbamba
nəbambəñia
nəbartəŋ
nəbatən
nəbəda
nəbəlda
nəbia
ndapəɾa
nəlaldabwa
nələŋ
nəmbəre

pit
paper
feather
book
nose
nut (for bolt)
crack in the ground
loan
crack in the ground
bare rock
stomach
lung
piece
pig's house
small pot
hoof
razor
drum
skull
tree, type of
receding hair line
tree, type of
cat
woven door
finger nail
tree, type of
king
cloth, made of palm leaves, for
carrying pots on head
horse
face, side of
garment
house

emərta
erel
erenia
eɾa

nəmərta
ndrel
ndrenia
neɾa

eɾada	nəɾada	inner upper part of mouth
eɾe	nəɾe	coconut tree
etam	nətam	neck
ëməðia	nëməðia	feast
ënəñia	nënəñia	ear
ërrua	nërrua	bag
ërua	nërua	leather
ëɾəŋjëtia	nëɾəŋjëtia	arm_pit
ëɾi	nëɾi	shield
ëɾia	nëɾia	mental person
ëtəria	nëtəria	gum (in mouth)
gəri	ndəri	trough
gi	ni	farm
idəbin	ndəbin	shoe
imaðul	nəmaðul	bark (of tree)
iməni	nəməni	tree, type of
iməŋ	nəməŋ	bell
indi	nəndi	drum
indria	ndria	knee
inwaɾua	nəwaɾua	back of knee
irəŋ	ndrəŋ	name
irtia	ndrtia	knife
iɾəli	nɾəli	year
iɾəlia	nɾəlia	season, age
loba	ngoba	water_snail
oca	nəca	small gourd for milk
ode	ndə	deer, kind of
odələŋ	ndələŋ	fox
odəɾala	ndəɾala	tortoise
oeiya	noeyia	tree, type of
olwa	nəlwa	gourd for milk
omaɾa	nəmaɾwa	snail
ombəɾia	nəmbəɾia	shoulder
oməcað	nəməcað	after birth
omma	nəmma	rat trap
ondwa	nondwa	piece of leather
orcəl	norcəl	poisonous tree
orəpwa	ndrəpwa	porch
oɾana	noɾana	arm (upper)
oɾəbel	ndəbel	monkey
oɾəñia	noɾəñia	plough
oɾopara	nəɾopara	peanut shell
otelia	ntelia	spider
otombo	nətombo	ostrich
ubwa	nubwa	moon
ubwaɾia	nubwaɾia	shoulder
udəpi	ndəpi	tree, kind of
ufuð	nufuð	umbilical cord
uli	nuli	tree, type of
uməcaða	numəcaða	placenta
uməðəni	numəðəni	store
uməɾa	numəɾa	ant
umia	nəmia	shellfish
undər	nundər	waist
urðia	ndrðia	deer, type of
urəðia	ndrəðia	deer, kind of
urida	ndrida	chain
uɾəfia	ndəfia	bird
uɾi	nuɾi	tree
usil	nusil	shade
usila	nusila	spirit
uɾa	nuɾa	wall

uṭua	nuṭua	wall
wara	nəwara	tree, type of
warra	nəwarra	cattle camp
wea	nwea	waist
wēt̪ia	nəwēt̪ia	shoulder

Long Things, Hollow Things, Deep Things, Round Things

lambala	ɲambala	shelter
laɽia	ɲaɽia	hat
leña	ɲeña	egg
ləbartəɲia	ɲəbartəɲia	fruit, kind of found in forrest
ləbatia	ɲəbatia	ground
ləbəða	ɲəbəða	fig
ləbəria	ɲəbəria	stick, long and thin
ləbəɽe	ɲəbəɽe	ring
ləbəɽea	ɲəbəɽea	flower
ləbia	ɲəbia	stair
ləbuɲa	ɲəbuɲa	gourd
ləɖwaiya	ɲəɖwaiya	fruit, kind of found in forrest
ləðorəba	ɲəðorəba	flower
ləðwa	ɲəðwa	plank of wood
ləfra	ɲəfra	big stick
ləmagəɲ	ɲəmagəɲ	horn, long and hollow, made of gourd
ləmaɽar	ɲəmaɽar	roof post, kind of
ləmbi	ɲəmbi	skirt, made of bark cloth
ləmbwalua	ɲəmbwalua	gourd dish
ləmir	ɲəmir	bead, kind of
ləmwa	ɲəmwa	jar
ləmwand̪ia	ɲəmwand̪ia	large pot
ləndria	ɲəndria	thigh
ləngerəɲgera	ɲgerəɲgera	flower
ləɲgəria	ɲəɲgəria	gourd dish, big
ləpəɾ	ɲəpəɾ	tail
ləpu	ɲəpu	well
lətolia	ɲətolia	cheek
lətu	ɲətu	shelter
lətwa	ɲətwa	whip made of palm leaves
lətəmia	ɲətəmia	ant hill
lətoma	ɲətoma	hollow behind the ear
lət̪ua	ɲət̪ua	back
ləðia	ɲəðia	bone
ləgəɾ	ɲəgəɾ	thought
lətəða	ɲətəða	ice
lətua	ɲətua	whip
ləfriñia	ɲəfriñia	eyebrow
ləmərə	ɲəməra	basket
lərmia	ɲərmia	chest
ləwandra	ɲəwandra	rock, stone
ɽe	ɲəɽe	duleib fruit
ɽia	ɲəɽia	water pot
ɽrabəɽa	ɲərabəɽa	seed of a certain tropica fruit
ɽreða	ɲəwərəða	sesame
ɽrel	ɲərel	molar tooth
ɽrəm	ɲərəm	herd of cattle
ɽri	ɲəri	vegetable like cucumber
ɽria	ɲəria	tree, kind of
ɽrtwa	ɲərtwa	bamboo
ɽrwa	ɲərwa	cow dung

Long Thin Things

dəd	ɖ	r	road, way
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dama
dambwa
daməla
dappa
datai
deɾəm
dəbətʃi
dəbwaico
dəca
dəfia
dəgwanda
dəl
dəlaicia
dəma
dəmanəŋ
dəmətʃəl
dəmɾənia
dəŋ
dəŋəla
dəñua
dəpia
dəɾəfia
dəɾu
dəɾwaa
dəɾwanda
dəɾia
dəi
dəia
dəmwaica
dəbənia
dəm
dəŋgoma
dəpa
dəɾa
dəwa
dəu
dəbətʃu
dəma
dəwala
dəwe

rama
rambwa
raməla
rappa
ratai
reɾəm
rəbətʃi
rəbwaico
rəca
rəfia
rəgwanda
rəl
rəlaicia
rəma
rəmanəŋ
rəmətʃəl
rəmɾənia
rəŋ
rəŋəla
rəñua
rəpia
rəɾəfia
rəldua
rəɾwaa
rəɾwanda
rəɾia
ri
ria
rmwaica
robənia
rom
roŋgoma
ropa
roɾa
rowa
ru
rubətʃu
ruma
rwala
rwe

locust
lip
thatching tool
friend
leaf
jaw
rat trap made of stone
groin
filter for making wine
tree, type of
bridge of nose
grave, horn
spoon
marriage
foot
scar
store for sesame
hand
tongue
forrest, desert
crown of head
tree, kind of
ardeb fruit
shoulder blade
bridge of nose
wound
thorn
woman's private parts
adult
shoulder
stream, little
nostril
star
root of duleib tree

heart
rat trap made of stone
yam
nail
woman's private parts

Ð ø

dəbərə
dəpeini
dəpəndəri
dəpəndri
dəra
dəraiŋjala
dərldia
dəɾətʃia
dəsia

ebərə
ipeini
upəndəri
upəndri
era
eraiŋjala
urldia
iɾətʃia
isia

split_bamboo, bow, arrow
tin, small; iron
timber, sawn; boat
door
vine
wall
root
palm leaf
worn by women between legs (in the past)

Large and Harmful Things

dabəlaɾa
dabərtula
dəgeria
dəgəracia
dəma
dəmala
dəŋjala
dəŋgurri
dər

ɗ y

yabəlaɾa
yabərtula
yageria
yagəracia
yama
yamala
yaŋjala
yaŋgurri
yar

bat (not animal)
locust, kind of
pot, open and big

locust
camel
ewe
chameleon
rope

daɾeria	yaɾeria	pot, open and big
ɖɛbarlda	yɛbarlda	river
ɖɛbəl	yəbəl	bird, type of
ɖəmwaɾɛ	yəmwaɾɛ	ox, neutered
ɖəŋor	yəŋor	elephant
ɖəra	yera	melon vine
ɖərəŋ	yərəŋ	field
ɖərna	yərna	skin
ɖəbia	yəbia	lion
ɖəpldua	yəpldua	lizard, type of
ɖəuria	yəuria	camel
ɖober	yober	eagle
ɖol	yol	rat
ɖoma	yoma	rat, kind of
ɖoperria	yoperria	sword
ɖoro	yoro	spring of water
ɖoɾar	yoɾar	poisonous snake
ɖowərr	yowərr	spring of water
ɖu	yu	intestine
ɖul	yul	giraffe
ɖwale	ywale	bird, green
ɖwarenia	ywarenia	desert rat
ɖwaɾa	ywaɾa	cock
ɖwato	ywato	lizard

Domestic and Small Animals

	ŋ	ñ	
ŋaca	ñaca		small animal
ŋafleka	ñafleka		wild ass
ŋaldara	ñaldara		locust, type of
ŋartəmada	ñartəmada		lizard
ŋaɾaka	ñaɾaka		lizard, small
ŋatabla	ñatabla		lock
ŋatəmeɾo	ñatəmeɾo		wild dog, type of
ŋatəmwaɾa	ñatəmwaɾa		cat
ŋatərəmbega	ñatərəmbega		insect, kind of
ŋatərəmboda	ñatərəmboda		insect, type of
ŋere	ñere		girl
ŋəɖənia	ñəɖənia		rabbit
ŋəlia	ñəlia		deer, type of
ŋəmbəɾo	ñəmbəɾo		calf
ŋəməna	ñəməna		goat, small
ŋərlda	ñərlda		deer, type of
ŋəɾem	ñəɾem		squirrel-like animal
ŋəɾəmən	ñəɾəmən		animal, small
ŋəɾəŋgia	ñəɾəŋgia		donkey
ŋina	ñina		dog
ŋoɾon	ñoɾon		squirrel
ŋowa	ñowa		young girl
ŋurwania	ñurwania		pig, small
ŋusu	ñusu		chicken
ŋwada	ñwada		billy goat
ŋwəlia	ñwəlia		hyena

Liquids and Abstract Nouns

ŋabəɾa	-	strength
ŋadəna	-	deceit
ŋaicia	-	sin
ŋaiyo	-	beauty
ŋam	-	tree sap, elastic
ŋan	-	milk
ŋaɾa	-	bottle gum
ŋaɾwa	-	glory

ηata	-	dirtyness
ηawa	-	water
ηela	-	oil
ηen	-	talk
ηəbaiya	-	slavery
ηədəl	-	stubornness
ηəðaiña	-	fear
ηəðəmwa	-	younghood
ηəfən	-	blood
ηəldenja	-	womanhood
ηələje	-	authority
ηəma	-	power
ηəmēɽria	-	work
ηəmnia	-	boyhood
ηənia	-	dancing
ηərəm	-	darkness
ηərja	-	childhood
ηərraɽa	-	salt
ηəɽa	-	urine
ηəɽaiñ	-	death
ηəɽəl	-	deafness, stubbornness
ηəɽəwen	-	lie
ηəɽom	-	theft
ηəɽu	-	sour dough
ηəsja	-	poison
ηətəða	-	insistance
ηətənia	-	manhood
ηorwata	-	hunger
ηud	-	dew
ηurid	-	sleep
ηurju	-	wine
ηwaiña	-	saliva
ηwal	-	tears
ηwucia	-	sauce

Abstract nouns (emotions)

đ

đaboja	-	curse
đabuɽətia	-	blessing
đaməðata	-	witness
đamətia	-	life
đamia	-	dignity
đara	-	crying
đəɽəðia	-	asking
đətəm	-	truth
đəbera	-	wind, a lot of
đəbəria	-	salvation
đəbwa	-	love
đəciano	-	anger
đəðərwaɽa	-	righteousness
đələɽənia	-	birth
đəməndəðənia	-	destruction
đəmwa	-	sickness
đəmwəðənia	-	story
đənaica	-	gift
đənaɽa	-	tasting
đənnata	-	obedience
đəɽəranano	-	happiness
đəɽwaiñədia	-	war
đəraməɽua	-	drunkenness
đəɽənaɽaralo	-	patience
đəɽreidəia	-	covenant
đəɽəðənia	-	redemption

dərɪnədia	-	killing
dəsa	-	eating
dətagare	-	humble
dətəta	-	following
dətoda	-	resurrection
dəturtia	-	waiting
dəutaralo	-	peace
dirwano	-	sadness
donaɾa	-	faith
dubwa	-	smoke
dwala	-	wealth
dwana	-	sorrow

Cow, Goat and other Irregular Nouns

ayala	-	sweat
dərɟia	ərɟe	side of body
dia	iria	cow
dətia	dətia	branch
ərda	eda	meat
ɲəsa	dəsa	food
rəmwɑ	imwɑ	snake, big
rɪdo	erɔ	goat
rɪdo	orɔ	goat
tia	iria	cow

Foreign Words

aiyən	eiyən	mountain
aləŋgərəm	eləŋgərəm	bed
alkursi	ilkursi	chair
asənta	esənta	bag
bambər	ilbambər	low stool, small
kanisa	ilkanisa	church
naɟara	enadara	glasses
suk	isuk	market